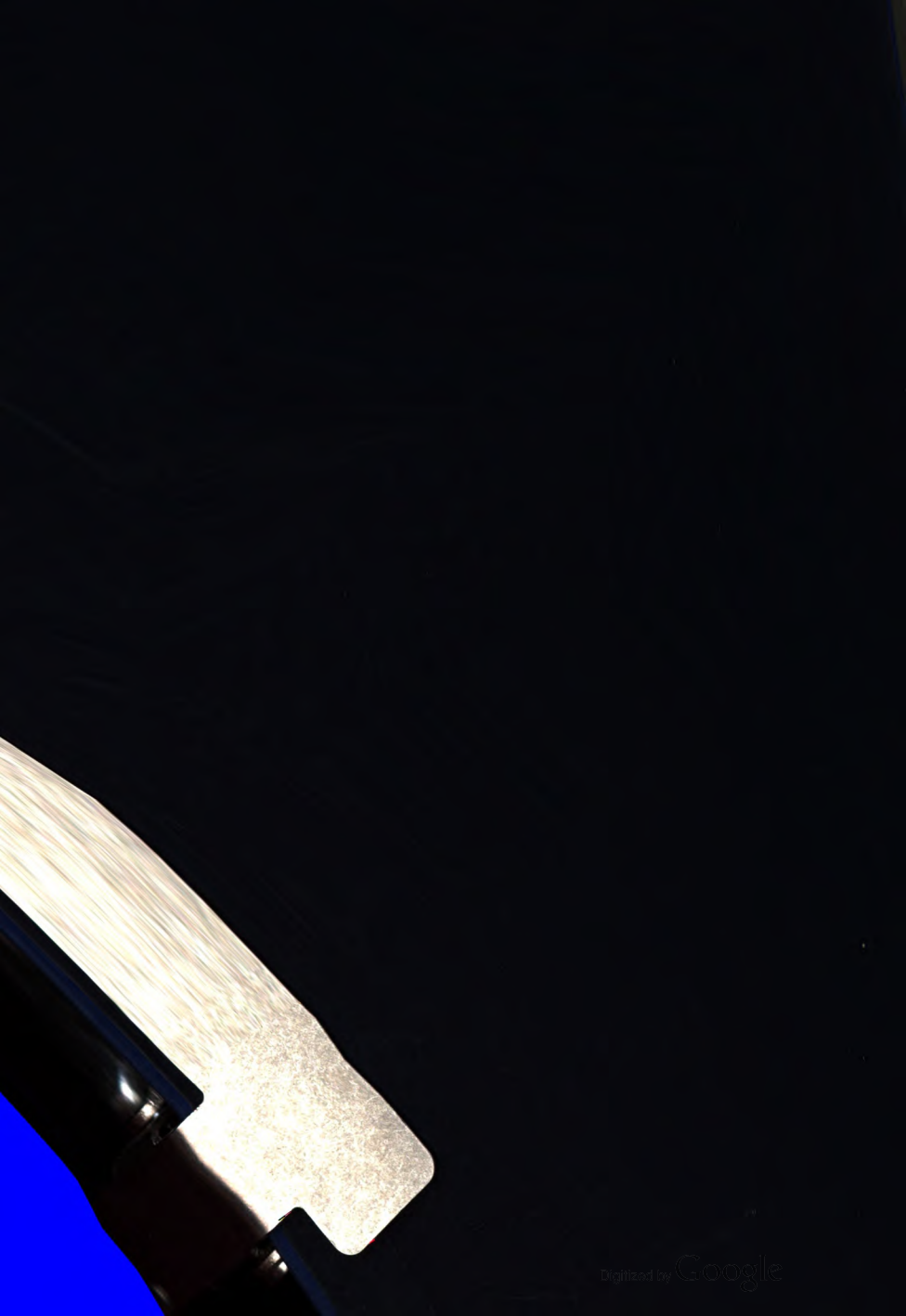
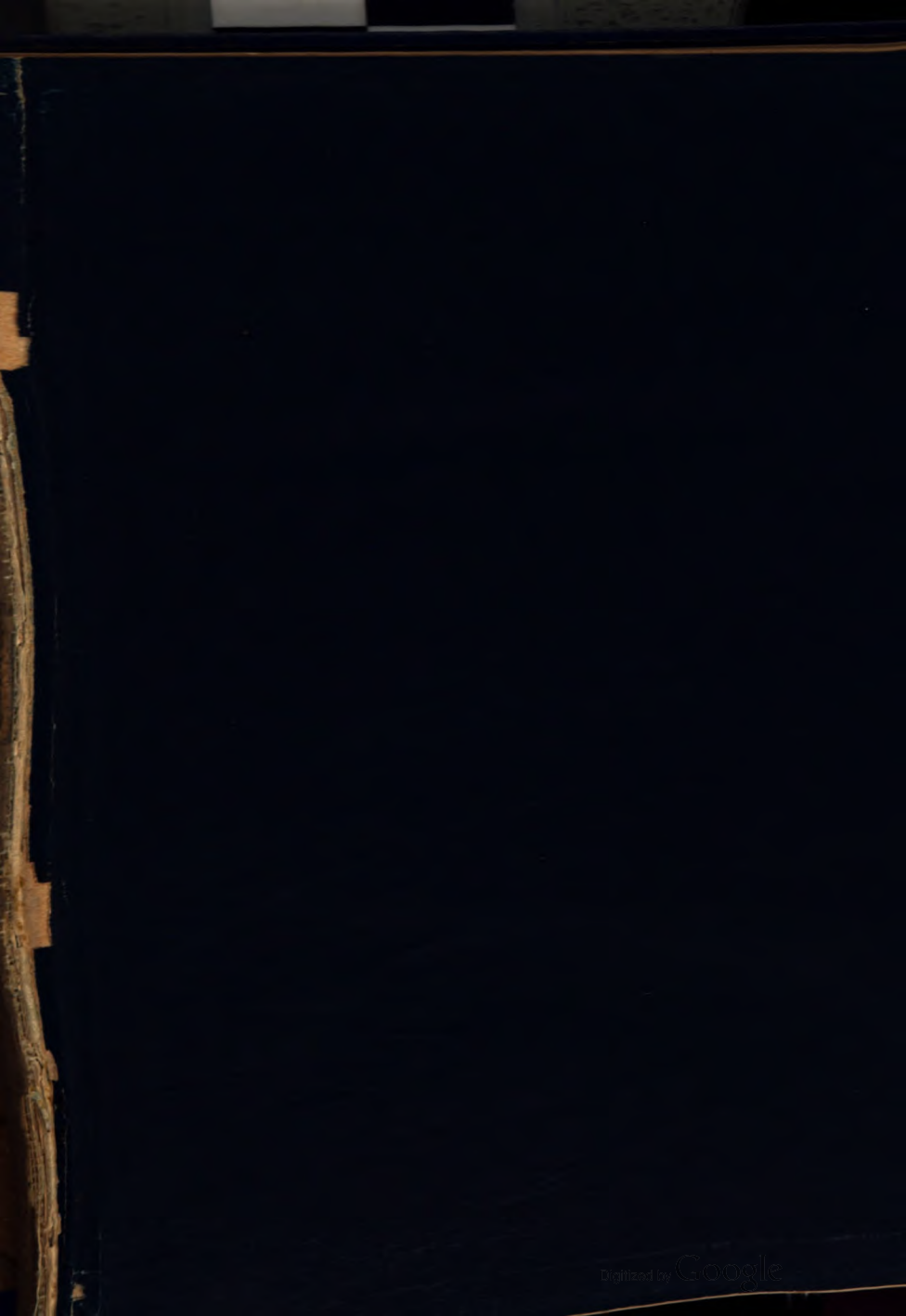
Sir Morton Peto, a memorial sketch

Henry Peto





41. Conduit St
W.
Feb: 22. 1893.

My dear Mr Andrews

I send a copy of the sketch of my Father's life with much pleasure.

I think I have a picture of Milton painted for my Father of the Folkestone

Viaduct.— This petty little sketch will give you interest. If so ~~it will give me~~ much pleasure will be given.

Yours truly

H. Peto

With the Writer's compliments —

76:1893

SIR MORTON PETO.

SIR MORTON PETO

A Memorial Sketch.

PRINTED FOR PRIVATE CIRCULATION.

Ad finem fideliz.

LONDON:
ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.
1893.

NOTE.

The materials for the following brief sketch of the career of Sir Morton Peto have been very scanty. He left no papers for reference. His letters before his stay at Pesth were written hastily on his journeys, and sometimes between Board meetings. He dictated some notes as to his early days, of which use has been made so far as possible. In his business and Parliamentary career newspaper reports of meetings and works, and 'Hansard's Debates,' have been the chief sources of information. To Mr. Forrest I am greatly indebted for access to the Library at the Institution of Civil Engineers, and to Messrs. Curry and Lankester for information kindly given as to railway and other works. The two portraits facing title-page and at page 112 represent Sir Morton respectively in middle age and in his closing years.

H. P.

CONTENTS.

ERRATUM.

Page 17, line 5 from foot, read Eastern Counties Railway (London to Yarmouth, 121¾ miles, with branches); it was divided into sections, etc. (*vide* Appendix, 'List of Works').

…hter of Martin de la Garde,
…wife, born 9 Aug., 1747;
…; died 15 April, 1815.

Thomas de la G…
born 29 March
28 Oct., 1847 –

…rles,
…May, 1780;
…Feb., 1823.

Elizabeth,
born 19 Jan., 1783;
died 15 April, 1815.

Nancy,=J. King,
born 3 May, 1788.
died 5 Jan., 1867.

Thomas,
born 4 Oct., 1801; died 26 May, 1874

…nah,=H. T. …rn Birkett.
…une, …9;
…d …ec., …8.

Elizabeth, = John Marshall, M.D.
born 30 April, 1813; died Nov 2nd, 1886.

Henry,
born 4 July, 1817; died 31 Jan., 1883.

Martin.

…st daughter of Robert
…born 5 July, 1741;
… Jan., 1766; died 21
…aged 90.

James, born 25 March, 1767; died 25 Nov., 1860, aged 93.

…Henry,
…born
…May
…4; died
… Sept.,
…1830.

Fanny,
born 4 Oct., 1775; died 11 Oct., 1841.

Ann, born 13 June, 1777; married Thomas de la Garde Grissell, 10 Jan., 1801.

Charles,
born 24 Nov., 1778; married Elizabeth Alloway; died 24 Feb., 1825.

Elizabeth,
born 30 Dec., 1782; married W. Hurst Ashpitel.

James,
born 22 Nov. 1805; died 29 Jan., 1806 –

…st dau. of
…dale, and
…n 8 July,
…ly, 1843;

William,
born 25 Sept., 1811; died 25 June, 1879 (married Emma Hobbs).

Sophia,
born 11 June, 1813; died 18 Nov., 1863 (married William French).

James,
born 5 Dec., 1815; (married Mary Lawrence).

Ann,
born 19 Sept., 1820; married Edw. Ladd Betts, 1843.

I.

EARLY DAYS.

Samuel Morton Peto (better remembered as Sir Morton Peto) was born on August 4, 1809, at Whitmore House, Sutton, in the parish of Woking. The house was then a farmhouse, on a farm which his father, William Peto, rented from the then owner of Sutton Place, Mr. Weston. Charles Peto, a brother of William, was a tenant of another farm on the estate, known as Lady Place. Whitmore House has by the removal of the farm buildings, which were between the road and dwelling, been much changed in surroundings; but the house remains much the same as it was originally, and on a visit in September, 1879, Sir Morton pointed out the room in which he was born. In the parish of Cobham resided his grandparents, James Peto and wife, and an uncle of the same name, who lived to be the patriarch of the family and a very

keen sportsman, as a portrait of him on his pony with a pack of harriers, in the family, shows.

At the age of six the subject of our memoir went to Cobham till his grandfather's death, in 1816, and attended a school kept by a Mr. Fletcher in a house which stood by the lichgate, at the north-east corner of the churchyard. After that period his parents removed to Low Grounds, near Great Marlow. Up to twelve years of age he daily went to a school at Marlow kept by a Mr. Field. When travelling in the United States, in 1865, Sir Morton was asked by a gray-headed man at St. Louis if he remembered 'James,' who had been a servant at Low Grounds, and Sir Morton reminded him of the duty 'James' had fulfilled of seeing him safe at the school-house. Long after the school-days were over, and having to be near Marlow on business, and hearing that his old schoolmaster was ill, he went to pay him a visit. Mr. Field was very pleased, and told him he was 'the only boy he ever had who wrote entire copies without the pen being made, and with the last line as good as the first.' At twelve years Samuel went to a boarding-school kept by a Mr. Alexander Jardine, at the top of Brixton Hill. The schoolmaster was an Independent. The school

had a very good reputation, and numbered about thirty boarders and some day-scholars. The terms were about thirty pounds per annum (without extras, *e.g.*, drawing, music, and fencing), and the education was at that time deemed sufficient for lads destined to a business career. The boy who could not end his schooling at fourteen was deemed 'a stupid lout;' so the new pupil was told; but while at Mr. Jardine's he showed there was no fear of the term being applied to him. He made rapid progress in drawing, as is shown by two water-colour drawings which remain—of a girl feeding pigs and a boy mending a net. The drawing-master was a Mr. Lee. Mrs. Jardine and Mrs. Lee were sisters. Mrs. Lee kept a young ladies' boarding-school a little way down the hill, and the boys went there for their drawing lessons, which were given in a room divided by a movable partition from the girls' music-room, and while the drawing went on the young ladies hammered away at the 'Battle of Prague' and the 'Siege of Paris.'

Samuel was taught Latin, French, simple mathematics, and algebra. In modern languages the education he received was mediocre; he felt this afterwards. Writing from Pesth, in 1869, he said: 'I am very much impressed while here with

the absolute necessity of our boys being *thoroughly* up in French and German. I find the boys here and in Vienna far better linguists and better mathematicians, and better acquainted with scientific matters generally, than our English boys, and the area is really so much enlarged in the race of competition that what was a good education formerly for a man to make his way with in the world, is now only a very second-rate affair.' But he showed his classical taste and his very happy gift of writing in gaining a 10s. prize for the best verse translation of a Latin hymn, 'The Cross the Way to the Crown,' in the *Youth's Magazine*, to which Jane Taylor contributed. From his aptitude in writing he was in great request to write letters for the school servants, none of whom could write. His uncle, Henry Peto, the builder, took a great interest in the school, and every month gave a series of prizes, from 10s. downwards, for the best series of texts exemplifying some religious doctrine, *e.g.*, the 'Divinity of Christ.' Samuel's younger brother William was also at Mr. Jardine's, and at twelve was the 'cock of the school.' He had many a fight to put down bullying, and the small boys looked to him as their protector. On one occasion, when an usher struck his elder brother with a round ruler

and hurt him much, William left his seat and struck the master such a blow that he knocked him off his seat. There was much commotion, and in came Mr. Jardine, who was at first very angry with William, but on William's saying that 'if the ushers were allowed to use rulers in that way he should tell his uncle Henry, and he would be surprised that such things were allowed in a school kept by a religious man,' Mr. Jardine took a different view, and the matter ended in the dismissal of the usher, who bore the mark of William's strength, a tooth having cut through his cheek. Celebrated preachers, as the Rev. W. Jay and the Rev. Dr. Leifchild, occasionally preached to Mr. Jardine's boys, and Mrs. Lee's young ladies, at the latter's establishment. The boys and girls were arranged on opposite sides of the room.

Sir Morton well remembered going to Surrey Chapel and hearing Mr. Jay preach the Rev. Rowland Hill's funeral sermon from the text: 'Howl, O ye fir-trees, for the cedar is fallen!' There was a large garden at Mr. Jardine's, and at the time of Queen Caroline's trial the boys divided themselves into 'The King's Men' and 'The Queen's Men,' their leaders respectively assuming the names of 'Lord Brougham' and

'Alderman Wood.' The arms used were long and tough cabbage stalks, and the battles waged in the garden were long and stiff.

At the age of fourteen years Morton was sworn an apprentice to his uncle, Henry Peto, and went to live with him at 31, Little Britain. His father gave him five pounds, saying it was well to have such a sum by him; he did not wish him to spend, but to keep the money till he really needed it. For the first three years of his apprenticeship he worked in the joiner's shop, and kept the same hours as the men—longer hours than those now worked—and as soon as the day's work was done, he had to hurry off after tea to attend a technical school kept by a Mr. Grayson and his son in Banner Street, Old Street Road, St. Luke's. The instruction, which commenced at seven and lasted till nine o'clock, consisted of a regular course of mechanical drawing and the theory of construction, the principal text-book being Nicholson's 'Carpentry.' The class was frequented chiefly by apprentices to the various branches of the building trade. After two years or more of attendance at Grayson's, he was sent to a class held by Mr. George Maddox, an architect who had chambers in Furnival's Inn, Holborn. Mr. Maddox did not practise as an architect, but

made his living by giving lessons in architecture, drawing and design, being himself a very clever draughtsman. For two years Samuel studied with him. Among other work he made a drawing of the east end of Ramsgate Church, and plans and elevations for a country house in the then prevalent classic style. He also had some instruction from a Mr. Beazley, a theatrical architect. Among the pupils was Charles Mathews, the comedian, whose work was always behind, his drawings scribbled over with Cupids, etc. Sometimes Samuel Peto took the drawings given to his fellow-pupil home to finish rather than that the work should fall in arrears, and Charles Mathews was well pleased with his substitute. After Samuel Morton had finished his course of evening classes, he continued his studies at home. He made a drawing of the Roman mosaic found at Walbrook, taking all needful notes and measurements on the spot. After three years at the bench, he spent a year in learning bricklaying, and at its termination prided himself on being a first-rate performer—able to lay his 800 bricks a day. Then, until the end of his apprenticeship, which expired three years later, the erection of various works was entrusted to him, the first superintendence being that of a house in

Carlton Gardens for Horace Twiss. Afterwards Raymond's Buildings, Gray's Inn, were constructed under his foremanship.

Mr. Henry Peto was very strict, and did not allow his nephew many holidays; but he enjoyed visits to his grandmother at Cobham, and rides on a horse his uncle had sent from Highbury Hill, where he then lived. Every Saturday he rode into the country, then to be found at Hampstead, Highgate or Hornsey. Others besides the nephew were objects of Mr. Henry Peto's kindness, notably an old waiter, 'William,' at the Rainbow Chop-house in Fleet Street, a favourite luncheon resort. One day Mr. Henry Peto asked 'William' if he would not like to keep a hotel. He replied there was nothing he would like better, but that he had no capital. 'Call on me to-morrow morning,' said Mr. Henry Peto, 'and I will see if I can arrange the matter.' And when he called the next morning he found Mr. Peto ready to start him at the hotel in Furnival's Inn, which Mr. Peto had built, and of which he was the owner. 'William' was here-after known as Mr. Woods, and Woods' Hotel so prospered that its first proprietor retired with £180,000. One condition of the lease granted by Mr. Henry Peto was that family prayers

should be held morning and evening in a room which the landlord had fitted up for the purpose.

Samuel Morton Peto had only just come of age and concluded his term of apprenticeship when his uncle died, September 15, 1830, leaving the building business to his nephews Thomas Grissell and S. Morton Peto—Mr. Grissell had been apprenticed to Mr. Henry Peto in 1815, and became his partner in 1825. Mr. Henry Peto's purpose had been made known to his nephews, their uncle telling them at the same time that neither of them had ever caused him a single moment of grief. Between the cousins there was perfect accord. Samuel Peto subsequently wrote to Major Grissell (a brother of his partner): 'It is a great source of satisfaction to me to reflect that during the six and a half years we have been together we have never had an unpleasant word or misunderstanding. I cannot speak too highly of him either in our connections of business or friendship.' The business was an important building business. It had, as will be shown, a prosperous career on a much larger scale. To the training the partners had received, and to their own industry, they were largely indebted for the measure of success they achieved. A biographical notice which appeared

in 1851, said: 'The seemingly precocious ripening of Mr. Peto's judgment will appear to be less inexplicable when it is stated that in pursuing the study of his business he did not confine himself to a mere acquaintance with its theory, but gave a laborious and zealous devotion to the manual pursuits of the three several handicrafts chiefly required in such establishments. He worked—and those who know his character can judge of the energy he imparted to his labours—not as the relative and future heir of one of the leading contractors of the kingdom, but as if he was destined during his lifetime to earn his livelihood as a journeyman in the capacity of a carpenter, a bricklayer and a mason, and there cannot be a question that, besides the inestimable utility he derived from the insight thus voluntarily acquired into the mechanism of labour so essential to his calculations in its employment in vast organized masses, he also thus became familiarized with what may be called the idiosyncrasy of the English mechanic, and he has thus become enabled to convert such knowledge to the accomplishment of the moral results observable in his works.'

II.

IN BUSINESS.

ALTHOUGH the firm of Grissell and Peto succeeded to a well-established business, it was not at the outset easy for them to maintain their position. 'We have,' wrote the junior partner, 'very much to contend with—a large business and circumscribed capital present many discouraging circumstances; but you know we must "Press Forward" (the motto of the Grissell family). We have made a tender for the Hungerford Market—our amount was £42,400; it was accepted; but we do not feel dismayed, the payments are very good — three-fourths every three months, and two years to complete it in.'

One obstacle with which the firm had to contend would seem to have been the youthful appearance of the younger partner, for on the tender for the

Hungerford Market being opened, and Grissell and Peto's found to be the lowest by £400, the Earl of Devon, the chairman of the committee, requested Mr. Peto to withdraw, and on being recalled the Earl informed him that the committee felt considerable hesitation in confiding a work so important to so young a man. Mr. Peto pretended not to take the objection seriously, and replied that if they would wait he would fetch his partner, who looked old enough for anything; adding that if his juvenile appearance was so much against him he must take to wearing spectacles, or adopt some other mode of giving himself an appearance of increased age. A more serious difficulty was litigation in respect of the estate of Mr. Henry Peto: the estate was considerable, the gross income being some £12,000; but there were mortgages of between £7,000 and £8,000 per annum, as well as annuities of about £3,000 per annum and a lawsuit regarding the Custom House, which Mr. H. Peto had built. The will was contested, but without success. The early difficulties of the firm were overcome. Their first contract proved a very remunerative one, and they became one of the most important building firms in the kingdom. Writing from Pesth in 1869 concerning one of his sons who had started a like busi-

ness, Sir Morton says: 'A building business is a very good one *if a man thoroughly knows it.* When I was with Mr. Grissell, our *ordinary* business coming regularly from the large breweries and fire offices, and the work of our own connection with the architects, netted on the average £11,000 to £12,000 a year, and with only £50,000 capital engaged in that department.' In London Messrs. Grissell and Peto built the Model Prison (Clerkenwell), the Reform, the Conservative, and the Oxford and Cambridge club-houses. The first-named club was designed by Sir Charles Barry, and the greatest care was taken in its execution. When frequenting the club in later years Sir Morton remarked how well the work stood, and said that every detail had received attention. The firm also built the Lyceum, St. James's and Olympic theatres, the first in sixteen, the second in ten weeks; the Nelson Column, St. John's Church in Cambridge Square, Paddington, and Mr. Blunt's church at the end of Sloane Street, Chelsea; among country houses, Studley Castle was built for Sir Francis Holyoake-Goodricke. Under Sir W. Cubitt, Grissell and Peto carried out the River Severn Improvement Works; under Mr. Brunel, all the works on the Great Western Railway from Hanwell to Langley,

excepting the embankment. They also had the contract for the Paddington and Reading stations, and the line between Reading and Goring. Owing to the vexatious conduct of the superintendent, the Hanwell to Langley section gave much trouble: the restrictions cost much money; these reached their limit when the superintendent ordered certain bricks to be carted from Clapton for the Hanwell viaduct, the cost being seven shillings per 1,000, and cochineal to be mixed with the mortar to give colour. On the day of Mr. Brunel's visit the contractor took care that the last operation should be in process, and Brunel at once ordered 'the foolery to be stopped.' The superintendent, however, kept payments in arrear, and the firm had to borrow £100,000. On the completion of the work they presented their bill, amounting to £162,000. The contract provided for the settlement of disputed accounts either by reference to arbitration or by the engineer-in-chief, at the option of the contractors. Mr. Peto conferred with Mr. Grissell as to which course should be pursued; but the latter said the work was not under his management, and he would not give any opinion. Mr. Peto went to Mr. Brunel and told him he would abide by his decision; Brunel, pleased, at once made an

appointment. The builder had a number of meetings with the engineer, and by the end of twelve months accounts were closed and a balance of £154,000 was paid to the firm. Grissell and Peto had better fortune than Mr. Macintosh, the contractor for the Hanwell embankment, who went to an arbitration which lasted thirty years.

Other important works undertaken by the firm were a large portion of the South-Eastern Railway, under Mr. Joseph Cubitt; the Woolwich Graving Dock, under Mr. Joseph Walker; and on the Grand Junction Canal the engine-houses and locks for re-using the water, as designed by Sir W. Cubitt.

Their last and most important building contracts were for the Houses of Parliament, the foundation of which was commenced in 1839. Grissell and Peto's first contract in connection with the work was dated 1840, and was for the range of buildings fronting the river from Westminster Bridge to Abingdon Street, the Speaker's residence and the libraries being included. The second contract was for the Houses of Lords and Commons, the Victoria Hall, Great Central Hall, Royal Gallery, and House of Commons offices. The third was for St. Stephen's Hall and Porch.

During the execution of these contracts the partnership of Grissell and Peto was dissolved. The business, as we have stated, had yielded very good results; but Mr. Grissell did not like the risks involved in the large railway undertakings, which needed larger capital, though all of these were profitable, save the contract in connection with the Great Western Railway. The dissolution took place March 2, 1846. Mr. Grissell took over the building business, saw-mills, and premises, and also the River Severn Improvement contract; Mr. Peto the railway works—a heavy contract on the South-Eastern Railway, including the Folkestone Viaduct, bridges and earthworks of about twelve miles of line; the Ely and Peterborough and Norfolk Railway contracts; also the Dorsetshire section of the London and South-Western Railway (Southampton to Dorchester). At this period Mr. Peto did not share Mr. Grissell's anxieties, as he wrote: 'These three contracts will just occupy me enough to thoroughly interest me. All my stock-in-trade will be £25,000 of plant, and all the rest *clear capital.*' He added: 'Mr. Grissell would stand with our stock-in-trade and plant of £150,000, including houses built and building for the firm, and, besides, he will have a large and *abundant*

capital in money; but, then, mine being all *in money* but the £25,000, I shall have it clear and ready for using, or taking on some one or two large railway works, and *nothing* else, which will only half occupy my time, and then the power of capital will always, with my previous experience, give me a preference without my being known as a *competitor to anyone.*'

In connection with the dissolution may be mentioned a circumstance characteristic of each partner. It was found after the accounts had been closed that Mr. Peto should have received £5,000 in cash in addition to the amount he had taken, and Mr. Grissell wished the matter put right; but Mr. Peto would not hear of the accounts being reopened; Mr. Grissell, however, bore it in mind, and after business had taken an unfortunate turn for his late partner, by a codicil to his will, executed in 1868, left £5,000 to his partner's eldest son.

The most important of the contracts which Mr. Peto had in hand in 1846 was the contract for the Eastern Counties Railway; it was divided into sections—London to Yarmouth, Wymondham to Dereham, Ely to Peterborough, Chatteris to St. Ives, Norwich to Brandon, London to Cambridge, Cambridge to Ely. Mr. Robert Stephenson was the

engineer-in-chief. On an inspection of the London to Cambridge line he expressed his dissatisfaction with a wooden bridge. The contractor saw the resident engineer, Mr. Borthwick, who said he alone was to blame, and at Mr. Peto's request gave him a drawing of an iron bridge of the type intended by the chief. On the final inspection Stephenson found an iron bridge substituted, and said, 'I never ordered this. Why have you done it?' Peto replied that by the terms of the contract the work was to be executed to the satisfaction of the engineer-in-chief, and he felt he could not leave a bridge standing with which Stephenson was dissatisfied. Stephenson warmly expressed his pleasure, and said that was the way in which he liked to be met, and in relating the story Mr. Peto said this laid the foundation of the trust the great engineer invariably placed in him. The cost of the Norwich to Brandon section was £12,000 per mile.

Contemporaneously with the execution of the Eastern Counties Railway works Mr. Peto had been working out his South-Eastern Railway contract for the Hythe to Folkestone section. The contract for the permanent way and ballasting of the Reigate to Folkestone section was in the hands of Mr. Edward

Ladd Betts, who in 1843 had married Mr. Peto's sister Ann. The company had in 1842 been in difficulties with the Saltwood tunnel, and as Mr. Peto had the contract for the line at either end, and Mr. Betts that for the permanent way, they agreed to finish the tunnel together. In 1846 the partnership of Peto and Betts was commenced, which continued till Mr. Betts' death in 1872.

The years 1847 and 1848 were very busy ones; they saw Mr. Peto's separate contracts in East Anglia and Dorsetshire concluded, and the loop line of the Great Northern Railway from Peterborough through Lincolnshire to Doncaster. In August of the latter year letters were dated on alternate days from London and Southampton, and on the fifth day from Peterborough; in the last letter Mr. Peto writes: 'Poor Mr. Stephenson (*i.e.*, George Stephenson) is constantly on my mind. How little did he appear near his end when with us! We were the last he dined with in London; he caught cold—fever and inflammation followed.'

The construction of the Norwegian Grand Trunk line from Christiania to Eidswold, forty-two miles in length, was arranged in this period at the cost of £450,000, Mr. Brassey being a partner with Messrs. Peto and Betts, Mr. Robert Stephenson

being the consulting, and Mr. Bidder the chief engineer.

The Lowestoft Harbour Works were also commenced. The population of Lowestoft was at this time 4,800; it is now about 26,000. At the time the works were commenced the land to the south of the bridge was a barren waste. Five commissioners were appointed to wait on Mr. Peto at Somerleyton, with the result that it was sold to him for £500. Then Mr. Peto asked if they knew the purpose for which he had purchased the land, and showed them the plans of the harbour and esplanade he intended to construct.

In 1847 occurred a severe financial crisis. 'I have never passed through such a crisis,' wrote Mr. Peto. 'I have now £200,000 owing me, and get it I cannot; but I trust my way will be made clear without sacrifice; but it must be some time before the clouds clear away, and it has been very anxious work—these things come perfectly unexpectedly, and are not to be guarded against in large affairs.' In the next year he wrote: 'I sometimes think that you may imagine I am more immersed in business than I should be; this is perfectly true; also that I never anticipated it; but things have gone so much out of course that I am troubled

where I should not be. I have now between £300,000 and £350,000 owing me by various companies, and having been obliged in the crisis to borrow £140,000, I am compelled to look up the companies so constantly and unremittingly that I find five times as much time absorbed in this as in my business, and, in fact, were I not to do so with the large surplus property we have, I should get my affairs disarranged, and be compelled to submit to an enormous sacrifice. I feel that if my health be spared, all will by the end of the year [1848] be collected in. I shall, as I am doing, pay off obligations I incurred from the want of good faith of those who are indebted to me, and from the gain in this and other works have a much larger surplus than will cover any loss, and I am sure it is my duty to you and the children to do this.'

Writing from Boston, he says: 'I have had a fatiguing journey altogether, and the weather has been bad; but I feel stronger and better for it; all has been fresh to me on the works, and Edward has arranged everything so admirably that I had nothing but pleasure in going through everything, and I had never seen the county of Lincoln before, so that altogether I feel much gratified. He will

find very great and continuous exertion necessary to be ready by September. We have thirteen engines and 8,000 men now on the works, and you may imagine how much arrangement is necessary.' On a later visit a letter shows how happy and active was the partnership between Mr. Peto and his brother-in-law: 'Edward has fagged very hard, and all his arrangements are as good as they can be.'

June, 1848, saw the Eastern Counties Railway contract through, with the following testimony from the engineer-in-chief (Robert Stephenson): 'In thus giving my final decision on these heavy contracts [they had amounted to £1,123,263] I find it my duty to state that many large and unforeseen contingencies have occurred and have required the greatest energy on the part of Mr. Peto, and it affords me satisfaction to add my testimony to the willing and unflinching manner in which they have been met.'

The most important of the contracts undertaken by the firm during the next few years—a full list of which is given at the end of this memoir—were the first section of the Buenos Ayres Great Southern Railway, 75 miles in length, at £10,000 a mile for construction and equipment, and 6 per cent. on capital until the opening of the railway; the

Dunaburg and Witepsk Railway, 161 miles in length, completed thirteen months before the date required by the contract, to the excellent execution of which work and the ability displayed by the firm the Russian Government testified; the line from Algiers to Blidah, the first railway in Algeria, and the quays at Algiers; the Oxford and Birmingham Railway, including the Harbury cuttings, the largest in Great Britain, containing 1,500,000 cubic yards.

The contracts for the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada and the Victoria Bridge at Montreal were undertaken by the firm of Peto, Brassey, and Betts with Sir William Jackson. To enable the contractors to execute these works the Canada Works at Birkenhead were constructed. The firm of Peto, Brassey, and Betts commenced the Royal Danish Railway (Schleswig and Jutland system), and constructed the Danish Gas Works at Copenhagen, Mr. Bidder being the engineer.

The Danish contracts obliged Mr. Peto to visit Denmark frequently. On his first visit he observed that the country wanted only a good railway system to enable its agricultural resources to be developed. This view has been amply verified. For eleven months of the year 1888 the exports of

Danish butter were in value £3,241,493, as compared with £422,479 in 1867, and during the last two years over 6,000 casks of 1 cwt. each have been sent from Denmark every week into England and Scotland.

The first section of the Danish line, seventy-two miles in length, was opened in October, 1854; the cost was £545,000. The *Illustrated London News*, of November 11, 1854, gives pictures of the opening ceremony and the lunch on board the steamship *Cygnus*, in which Mr. Peto and party crossed to Tonning, on which occasion the King, Frederick VII., invested Mr. Peto with the Order of the Danebrog. The King was on all Mr. Peto's visits very cordial; on one occasion he came to the capital from Fredericksborg to save him time. He also gave him his portrait, painted by Madame Jérichau, and a present of four Danish ponies. In commemoration of the opening of the section the King accepted from him a painted window, designed by the late John Thomas, for the Chapel Royal at Fredericksborg. The entire system of railways in Denmark contracted for by Peto, Brassey, and Betts extended to 350 miles.

The Grand Trunk Railway of Canada was a still larger and much more costly undertaking, in

length 539 miles, one half of it being on the north side of the river St. Lawrence, extending from Montreal westward as far as Lake Huron; the remainder on the south side in two main branches: the original Atlantic to St. Lawrence, passing southward from Montreal to Portland; the other, the original Quebec and Richmond line, extending eastward to Quebec. There is a further extension on the same side to St. Rivière du Loup. The engineer-in-chief was Robert Stephenson; the resident engineer, Alexander John Ross; the representative of the contractors, James Hodges.

The river St. Lawrence being closed half the year by ice, the Victoria Bridge was designed to maintain the communication. The bridge is $1\frac{3}{4}$ miles in length; the contract sum was £1,250,000, but the expenditure reached £1,400,000. In Robert Stephenson's Life, by J. C. Jeaffreson, the undertaking is described in a chapter written for the biography by Professor Pole, and more fully in a work on the bridge by Mr. Hodges. The whole of the iron work was designed by Stephenson at his office in Great George Street, Westminster, and the execution of it was carried out at the Canada Works, Birkenhead. The contractors placed themselves entirely in Stephenson's hands. The con-

tract required 'the bridge, when completed, to be in perfect repair, and of the best and most substantial character, and to be approved by Robert Stephenson.' On the other side, Mr. Stephenson placed implicit confidence in Mr. Hodges and his firm; he paid but one visit to Canada, the reason being, his biographer says, that nothing occurred in the execution of his designs to demand his presence. When Mr. Hodges proposed to depart from the usual method employed for laying the foundations, and to use coffer dams, Stephenson acquiesced, and subsequently gave as his reason: 'I was actuated by the feeling that the engineer would not be justified in controlling the contractors in the adoption of such means as they might consider most economical to themselves, so long as the soundness and stability of the work was in no way affected.' Mr. Hodges' difficulties were enhanced by the short period of the year—but sixteen weeks—during which the masonry could be executed, and in 1857 he adopted the device of bedding the ashlar masonry in felt in lieu of mortar. Strips of asphalted felt, about three inches in width, were laid along the whole of the front of the masonry at such a distance from the edge that the work might be effectually pointed. On each of the cross-joints

similar strips were placed, as likewise at the back of the stones. As soon as one course of ashlar was laid it was dressed perfectly fair on the bed to a straight edge for the reception of another course, which was superimposed in a similar manner, the backing being laid dry and packed as closely as possible. Open spaces, or flues, were left about one foot square throughout the whole height of the pier. The work was completed in this manner during the winter, and as soon as the weather permitted, and the frost was fairly out of the stone, the piers were carefully pointed, and the whole of the interior well grouted from the flues. The whole thus became one solid mass, the clear water which filtered through the joints showing very accurately the process of the grouting. Professor Pole says this admirable process hastened considerably the completion of the bridge. Frequently the thermometer went 50° below freezing-point. If there was any wind, the portions of the body immediately exposed became instantly frozen, and the men had to work in thick gloves and heavy coats, fur caps covered their ears, and heavy handkerchiefs were worn over their faces, leaving only a small portion open for vision. It often happened when the wind blew up-stream that the

men became covered with icicles, and were obliged to leave the works; scores of men were in hospital frozen in their hands, ears, and faces. Owing to cholera in 1854, one-third were in hospital at one time. Scarcity of labour, frequent strikes and insubordination among the 3,280 employed, abetted by parties among the inhabitants who declared the bridge to be a defiance of Providence and prognosticated its failure, gave rise to serious difficulties. Owing to these obstacles, and especially the general depression consequent on the Russian War, the abandonment of the contract was at one time contemplated. Mr. Peto's letters show the anxiety that was experienced. 'I am glad to say,' he wrote in 1855, 'all the arrangements are going on well; but I never felt so harassed in my life with all the details of one kind and another, and I cannot but feel this great trial has been permitted to show me I have given too much time and energy to *this* world, and too little to the things which ought to have had so much larger a share of my time and care.' The same letter, however, contains a passage which shows business did not absorb all his attention: 'All passed off well at the missionary meeting to-day. I could not remain all day, but stopped during the

Serampore discussion, which ended in our unanimously agreeing to adopt the college.'

In the same year in which the Royal Danish Railway was opened, a like ceremony took place in Norway, the Norwegian Grand Trunk Railway being opened. The *Illustrated London News* of October 7, 1854, gives an account of the inauguration.

For what has been termed Mr. Bidder's *magnum opus*—the Victoria London Docks—Messrs. Peto, Brassey and Betts were the contractors. The docks enclose 100 acres of deep water, with extensive quay space and warehouse accommodation, with larger locks and gates than any other docks in London. Cast-iron piles and concrete were freely used in the construction of the walls. The cost, including hydraulic machinery, cranes, etc., was £870,000.

We have alluded to the difficulties the firm experienced in carrying out their contract for the construction of the Victoria Bridge. It was, too, at this time that the armies in the Crimea were in what Kinglake describes as 'the winter troubles.' In vol. x. of his 'History of the Crimean War' he says: 'The problem of making a road between camp and fort long continued to resist all solution, and this, as we saw, because labour in the requisite quantity could neither be got by hiring it nor

wrung from an overtasked army, which, engaged day and night with the enemy, and already doing three times the work that could well be called moderate, was unable to furnish "hands" for the execution of any such task.' Sir John Burgoyne wrote to Lord Raglan: 'To save conveyance of forage, all the cavalry and a large proportion of artillery horses are moved down to Balaklava; still, it is with difficulty that the troops can be kept supplied even with *provisions*. There is a lamentable deficiency of fuel for cookery, and materials for some kind of shelter better than tents are of primary necessity—all, too, before we can attend to getting up heavy guns, shot and shells. You may conceive the state of our men, and how hard are the duties, from the following: Two soldiers (a double sentry), on look-out in our more advanced trench in front of our batteries, were surprised two nights ago *fast asleep* at their posts by a small party of Russians, and bayoneted! a most brutal act. This serious crime, compromising the safety of perhaps thousands, and so derogatory to every military principle, was justified, excused, by the officers on the plea that human nature cannot support the fatigues that the soldiers have to undergo. The reports from commanding officers of regiments and generals are to

the same effect. The army is sickly to a grievous extent, and is declining numerically as well as physically.' The *Times* correspondent wrote from Balaklava: 'There is nothing to eat, nothing to drink, no roads, no commissariat, no medicine, no clothes, no arrangement; the only thing in abundance is cholera.'

The state of the army caused great dissatisfaction in England. Stephenson wrote to a friend: 'I long to be at Balaklava to get the stores away to the camp. I believe I could be useful there, as long as I felt myself beyond the range of the artillery.'

Mr. Peto felt the national disgrace as keenly as the great engineer. The idea of a railway to connect camp and harbour occurred to him; he mentioned it one night at the House to Lord Palmerston, who urged him at once to speak to the then Secretary for War, the Duke of Newcastle. The latter approved, and conferred with the Prime Minister, the Earl of Aberdeen. The construction of the railway was determined upon, and the Duke of Newcastle wrote to Lord Raglan on December 2: 'They (Mr. Peto and Mr. Betts) have in the handsomest manner undertaken the important work with no other condition than that they shall reap no

pecuniary advantage from it.' The organization of the detail and transport was undertaken by Mr. Betts, the general direction and administration rested with Mr. Peto, who, in a memorandum he wrote for the 'Life and Labours of Mr. Brassey,' by Sir A. Helps, states that to the work of Mr. Betts, and advice, almost daily at the outset, of Mr. Brassey, more credit is due than to himself.

The Duke of Newcastle gave Mr. Peto most urgent instructions to omit nothing which in his and Mr. Betts' judgment and experience might be considered as necessary. Mr. Beatty and a staff of assistants (Messrs. Campbell and Kellock were the chief) were at once despatched. Colonel Gordon, C.E., wrote from the camp: 'The civil engineers of the railway have arrived, and we hope soon to see the navvies and the plant. No relief that could be named will be equal to the relief afforded by a railway. Without the railroad I do not see how we can bring up guns and ammunition in sufficient quantities to silence the guns of the enemy.' Twenty-three large steamers with men, horses, commissariat, and other stores, were quickly sent out. Three doctors and three Scripture-readers accompanied the men, who numbered between 400 and 500—300 navvies, 100 carpenters, 30 masons,

30 blacksmiths, 12 engine-drivers, and about 30 well-sinkers, besides gangers, foremen, and plate-layers. Most of the navvies had been accustomed to severe winters, having worked on Canadian rail-roads; they were engaged for six months at five shillings per day. The Duke of Newcastle went to see the first embarkation in December, and was surprised to see the care taken for the men. He asked Mr. Peto what was the purpose of the tar-paulins he saw, and was informed they were for the men till their wooden huts were up. 'What a good thing it would be if some could be sent out for our poor soldiers, who have to sleep on the bare ground!' said the Duke. Mr. Peto told him he could get as many as he wanted in two or three days. Owing to the proceeding, however, being deemed irregular by the Ordnance Department, the offer accepted by the Duke was not carried out. The care taken of the navvies had its reward, for the death-rate among them was lower than the average death-rate in London for the same period.

The Government showed their appreciation of Mr. Peto's foresight and patriotism by recommending him to Her Majesty for a baronetcy, and from that time he became known as Sir Morton Peto.

General Simpson reported to Lord Panmure: 'The line is on the best site that can be obtained, and when properly ballasted, which is being done, will be quite free from floods.' The General's prediction was fulfilled, as the traffic on the line when opened was suspended only for thirty-six hours by a waterspout which did great harm at Balaklava. On February 11 Sir J. Burgoyne wrote: 'I am happy to say the railway works are progressing. They have a line of rails from the centre of the town to a little way out; from about half a mile farther they will have a very steep incline, and a stationary engine, and, when workable to the top of the heights, will be of vast service.' Within ten days of the landing of the first rails the village of Kadikoi was reached. The line was at once used for conveying shot and shell. In seven weeks the Col was reached, a distance from the commencement of the railway of about 4½ miles, and at an elevation of about 660 feet above the level of the sea, and a branch line of ¾ mile to the Ordnance or Diamond Wharf was laid, the stationary engine at Frenchman's Hill was fixed and at work, and the line from Balaklava to Kadikoi was doubled; the remainder of the distance to the camps was comparatively level. With extensions

and branches the lines laid amounted to 39 miles. As an instance of the rapidity with which the contractors acted may be quoted the following from the *Times* of July 23, 1855: 'An order for 130 railway waggons, 40 drivers, 10 shoeing smiths, and a variety of material for the railway, was received on Tuesday last, and on Saturday the *Leipzig* steamer, belonging to the North of Europe Steam Navigation Company, 700 tons and 250 horse-power, will be on her way to the Crimea.' The navvies Sir John Burgoyne wrote of as 'fine, manly fellows,' and he wanted to obtain their services for aiding the regular troops in the defence of the positions. Mr. Beatty, however, said by any such transfer of employment the terms of the agreement on which they had been engaged would be contravened; but whatever masons and carpenters could be spared were employed in building lime-kilns, bakeries and wharves, and in sinking wells, and a considerable number of men were employed as brakesmen, pending the formation of the Army Transport Corps, which afterwards worked the line.

The only accident which occurred on the railway was serious to Mr. Beatty. The 71st Regiment had been ordered to the front, and was forwarded in

three trains; two went down the incline from the Col in safety, but the third, in which was Mr. Beatty, could not be stopped: the breaks were overpowered in endeavouring to stop the train, Mr. Beatty was thrown out, and received an internal injury from which he never recovered. He was asked by Lord Panmure to remain in charge of the railway, but owing to the failure of his health after the accident he declined, and left the Crimea in November, 1855. On his death, the Government, importuned by Sir Morton, awarded a pension to Mrs. Beatty as if a Colonel's widow. To the use of the railway General de la Marmora testified from his experience in command of the Sardinian army, and Sir John Burgoyne wrote to Sir Morton that it was impossible to over-rate the services rendered by the railway, or its effect in shortening the duration of the siege and alleviating the fatigues and sufferings of the troops.

Soon after the railway had been opened it was computed it had taken to the front 246,600 lbs. of food and forage (daily 112 tons), 1,000 tons of shot and shell, 300 tons of small arms, 3,600 tons of commissariat stores, besides 1,000 tons of miscellaneous goods.

During the next two or three years—very busy ones—Sir Morton made journeys to Algeria and Portugal; the object of the trip to Portugal being to obtain the contract for the construction of a system of railways north of Oporto and to the Spanish frontier, the cost being estimated at £3,500,000. On one of his tours in Portugal surveying the district to be traversed by the proposed railway, some delays occurred, and he started on the tender of the engine, seated on loose coal-bags; all along the line he was greeted by the navvies who were at work, and at the end of the line, where a large number were engaged who had formerly worked under him, the hurrahs followed faster and faster, until, to the surprise of a wondering circle of Portuguese bystanders, the men mounted him on their shoulders and carried him in triumph to the hotel. In the negotiations with the Government Sir Morton had the support of M. Erlanger. The King was personally in favour of the contract being made with Peto and Betts, and all the Ministers expressed themselves in favour of the acceptance of their proposals. On Sir Morton's leaving Lisbon in 1857 three State barges attended him.

On a later visit, however, he wrote: 'I find that since I was last here a French party has been

intriguing and using money among the employés of the Board of Works.' Sir Morton did not gauge the corruptible nature of the Portuguese officials. Owing entirely to baser arguments than he would employ, the Bill for the acceptance of Peto and Betts' proposals was thrown out. The English agent of the firm at Lisbon said 5,000 dollars would have bought over those who could have controlled matters, and we remember the Portuguese representative of the firm saying it was entirely owing to Sir Morton's refusal to employ money in buying the votes of Ministers and members that the contract was lost.

During 1856 and 1857 the Danish contracts were in execution, the Victoria Bridge was being built amid difficulties, the East Suffolk Railway was commenced, and the new harbour works at Holyhead were being proceeded with.

Sir Morton was at this time chairman of the Chester and Holyhead Railway, an office which occupied much of his time and caused him much anxiety. At times he had lent the company as much as £100,000 to relieve difficulties. In acknowledging a vote of thanks he said that when he joined the Board he had found it beset with heavy claims; and he instanced one claim for

£80,000 which he settled for £2,000, and another for between £200,000 and £300,000 which he compromised for £5,000. The years were years of care. 'Sometimes I think of things,' he wrote in 1856, 'and I cannot help it; yet I feel, if my health is granted me, that I shall, by the blessing of Divine Providence, be able to put all right. I do not see any reason for desponding. Constant attention and perseverance will get through great difficulties.' In November of 1856 matters were brighter, but in 1857 occurred a severe panic, and he wrote: 'We have great cause for thankfulness that it did not come last year instead of this, when we had so large an amount of engagements outstanding; still, it requires great care, and to be within reach more than I like at this season of the year (October). However, I feel, I trust, very grateful that it has come at this time, otherwise it would have been very much more serious; our only cause of any anxiety is that others keep faith with us, and in this respect it is so good a thing that our engagements are small in comparison with last year.' The liabilities of the firm were then estimated at £11,000,000.

In November occurred the stoppage of the Western Bank of Scotland: 'This and another

failure for £2,000,000 have put all into gloom with mistrust. I had £30,000 due from one company to-day, and £7,000 from another, and I did not get 1s.' In December he writes: 'I do not think things seem much better. I wanted to-day to remit £3,000 *viâ* Hamburg, and such is the distrust of the houses that I could not get it done, and now shall have to send the money in coin or bank-notes by special messenger. A Danish merchant wanting colonial produce has had to send silver.'

In 1858 prospects brightened. Writing from Halesworth, he reports: 'The works [East Suffolk Railway] are all going on well, and the great alteration in the money market takes away all the anxiety I have felt for some time.' In October the West-End and Crystal Palace Railway was opened, and on the 27th of the month the Grand Trunk Railway of Canada. Sir Morton writes: 'They have subscribed £8,000 to spend in rejoicing in Canada. I don't think if I were there I could have any spirit—well, so it is, and it is no use giving way, but I must rather cultivate a cheerful spirit for so many blessings left to enjoy, especially my loved ones at home.'

The Victoria Bridge was not opened till October, 1860; Mr. Hodges represented the contractors, and

at the opening ceremony a tribute was paid to the energy shown by them. To explain the difficulties which the firm had in carrying through this vast work, for which payments amounting to £1,400,000 were due, it should be stated that during the early years the contractors received payment in money, but during the later periods they had to take it in equal portions of cash and shares. 'How keenly I feel the mistake I have made,' wrote Sir Morton, 'no one can tell.' The check, however, which his career received did not discourage him, but seemed rather to stimulate to greater efforts, and in the following year he wrote: 'I do not see, if I am able to do what I trust and believe that by God's blessing I shall, that much is to be said [this in reference to some newspaper comments]. Mr. Brassey said last evening if we had our health and strength we ought in five or six years to gain more than we have lost. We are doing better than in the beginning of the last seven years. We shall have £10,000 a year, and if at the end of six or seven years we get nothing, but wind up, we shall be worth £200,000, besides the £10,000 a year; so I feel we must be thankful and take heart and hope all will be well. The capital employed in the Birkenhead business is £90,000, one-third of which is mine, and I did not calculate

on drawing anything from the business till we had wound up the Grand Trunk Railway and railway works, so as to have a *clear* result.'

Between December 1, 1859, and December 31, 1860, Sir Morton made fourteen journeys to Paris. In the latter year he went to Algiers to meet the Emperor and Empress of the French; the latter laid the foundation-stone of the railway-station on the terminus of the line (30 miles) connecting Blidah with Algiers. The ceremony was performed with much pomp, 10,000 of the troops being drawn up, and the Emperor and Empress having an escort of 1,000 of the Cent Gardes. 'I never saw a more beautiful or graceful person,' Sir Morton wrote of the Empress; 'but she looked the picture of grief. I found on inquiry she had learned the night before that her sister the Duchesse d'Albe is ill—she is really dead, but the Empress does not know it. After the religious ceremony she burst into tears, and the Emperor had to conduct her to her seat. She went behind it surrounded by her ladies of honour; the Emperor endeavoured to comfort her, then returned and finished the ceremony. He told the Minister to call me, and as near as I can recollect he said as follows: "I am truly glad to see you, Sir Morton Peto, in

Algeria. I do not forget the service you have already rendered to my country; you may always count on me when any difficulties arise, and you are always at liberty to see me. The railways in the colony and the warehouses in the port are essential to its advancement. I trust that you will have no reason to regret the enterprise, and apart from the profit arising from it, I hope you will enjoy the consciousness you are an instrument in advancing the civilization and happiness of my people." On his return to the palace the Emperor sent for his architect, M. Eugène Lacroix, and asked how it was I had not dined with him. M. Lacroix said: "Sir Morton never received your invitation." General Fleury was sent for, and it was found the invitation had not been sent. The Emperor appeared vexed, and said: "Tell Sir Morton to come to-morrow morning. I will see him at nine." In the morning at nine I waited on the Emperor; in five minutes he came out, and shook me by the hand; he talked with me for twenty minutes, asked my opinion of the country, its advancement, etc. I pointed out to him the heavy port charges and several other hindrances to trade; he took note of them, and on my apologizing for taking up so much of his time, he said: "It is very interesting to me.

I value highly your views on these matters—you have seen so much and know these things so well that I get from you what I cannot get from my Ministers." I then asked him to accept Mr. Hodges' book on the Victoria Bridge, which he accepted most graciously. He looked through the engravings with me, and asked me very many questions on the climate and productions of the country, and on my bowing and leaving he held out his hand, and said to me, "Come to me on any difficulty in the works, and rely on my friendship for their removal."'

Sir Morton said in the same letter, 'It is right to be prudent and not bring reproach,' and accordingly in 1862 he sold the Somerleyton estate to Sir Francis Crossley, and he and Mr. Betts their shares in the Clay Cross Colliery to Sir Henry Jackson. The latter investment had been a very successful one, shares purchased for £20,000 realizing £70,000. An investment of Sir Morton's, by which he hoped to benefit Lowestoft by establishing a trade in cattle with Denmark, was in the North of Europe Steam Navigation Company, which involved him in a heavy pecuniary loss (£60,000). Whenever he stood for Parliament, Mr. Abel, a shareholder and barrister, followed him, and accused him of

having brought the company to ruin for his own pecuniary advantage. But Sir Morton had said to the shareholders, on behalf of himself and his co-directors: 'We now advise you to appoint from among yourselves a committee to co-operate with the board in examining the accounts of the company, in analyzing those accounts with the most rigid minuteness, and also examining the various stations of the company, as exhibited by those accounts, to see, not merely where the loss has been occasioned, but to determine, from the character of the trade in which you have been engaged, what are the prospects you have for the future. Every circumstance connected with the past and future prospects of the company shall be placed before you, and you shall be made aware of everything that by the most minute examination you can possibly be made aware of.' The committee were appointed, and reported that they 'felt bound to state their conviction that nothing had come under their notice impugning the integrity or honourable motives of the board or their officers,' and the shareholders in meeting adopted the report.

Of more permanent benefit to his county was the construction of the East Suffolk Railway, which led to a presentation to him, through the Earl of

Stradbroke, of silver plate and a dessert service. The contract was executed in trying times, and a shareholder at a meeting expressed his opinion that no one else could have carried on the undertaking during the severe money panic. On the proposal to start the testimonial, £500 was subscribed in the room, and the sum total reached £2,000. The presentation took place at a banquet at Lowestoft, presided over by the Earl of Stradbroke.

The last of Messrs. Peto and Betts' contracts, and one which proved very disastrous, was that for the Metropolitan extension of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway. They had previously taken a contract for the portion of line between Strood and the Elephant and Castle section; and with the late Mr. Crampton, who made the Kent coast section, they entered into the contract for the extensions to the West-End and Blackfriars Bridge. As in the case of the Grand Trunk Railway, the firm had to take shares in lieu of cash, which led to financial relations with Overend, Gurney and Co., Limited. It is needless to attempt to explain how the contractors became so deeply involved in the fortunes of the railway company. Suffice it to say that the suspension of Overend, Gurney and Co., Limited, was followed by that of the contractors

in May, 1866. Sir Morton was able to show that his advice had been given to the directors at their own request, and that all financial arrangements, so far as issue of debentures, etc., was concerned, had been made under the direction of the legal advisers of the board. As a matter of fact he had no separate legal adviser.

The balance-sheet of Peto and Betts showed a large surplus. The *Economist* newspaper, among other journals, augured well of the prospects of the firm; but the accounts between the contractors and the London, Chatham and Dover Railway were both contradictory and most difficult to unravel; the contractors claiming a balance due to them of £380,000, the railway company, on the other hand, claiming to be creditors to the extent of £6,661,941. After a protracted investigation of accounts and long cross-examination, proof against the estate of the firm was allowed to the extent of £1,000,000. The commissioner said there was no imputation on Sir Morton's character. Some months before this, at a meeting at Bristol at which Sir Morton explained to his constituents his concern with the affairs of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway Company, and the misfortunes which necessitated his resign-

ing his seat in Parliament, he had declared, amid the cheers of the meeting, 'that, although the avalanche of May last had damaged temporarily the prosperity of his house, yet still he was perfectly conscious that there was one priceless jewel which he did not lose, and that was a conscious feeling of his own integrity.'

The late Mr. Marshman wrote to him: 'After a most searching and hostile inquisition, the imputations which have for two years beclouded your good name have been dispelled and the wound has not left a scar. The most violent of your assailants, the *Daily Telegraph*, is now among the foremost to express satisfaction at the result of the investigation.' But the blow which the firm received was too severe, owing to the long time of enforced idleness. Neither Sir Morton nor his partner was a man to be daunted; the former spent a great portion of the years 1868 and 1869 at Buda-Pesth in preparing and urging forward a scheme for the regulation of the Danube. Mr. Brassey met Sir Morton in Pesth and Sir Morton met him in Vienna, and Sir Morton, referring to Mr. Betts' visit to Pesth in 1869, wrote: 'Edward is greatly pleased with all the estimates of the works, and I trust all looks as though we should succeed; but we

must be patient.' In July he wrote: 'I learn to-day in confidence from the engineer-in-chief of the Danube works, who was present at the Council of Ministers yesterday, that our offer was discussed, and when the Premier said he had been informed that it would not be wise to entrust us with the work, as it would be immensely beyond our power, the Minister of Finance said he had inquired of our bankers, Messrs. Glyn and Co., and was perfectly satisfied. The cities of Pesth and Buda and the provinces have to give their consent to the scheme.' The project, to the disappointment of the firm, was not carried through, and another scheme was adopted.

The surveys of the lines in Russia from Witepsk to Orel (305 miles), and a line to Kieff, made prior to 1866, were of no result; the contract for the first was given to another firm, and the other line was never constructed.

In April of 1869 Sir Morton wrote from Paris: 'I settled everything here for the Palace of Justice at Algiers, and have made an offer to the Government for the hospital through M. Chauvel, who is to see the Emperor upon these matters. M. Lacroix told me yesterday that the Emperor had ordered that the Ambassador at London should

inquire at Glyn's if we were now free and able to take any large works, and he told M. Lacroix the reply was most satisfactory. It is pleasant to see him take so much personal interest.'

The war of 1870 was a barrier to any fresh business in the French colony. Messrs. Peto and Betts' only contract after 1866 was a small one for alterations on the Metropolitan Railway under Sir John Fowler, to which Mr. Betts gave much care, as the traffic could not be suspended. After Mr. Betts' death (1872) Sir Morton undertook the construction of the Cornwall Minerals Railways, a system some 50 miles in length, connecting Newquay in the north of the county with Par and Fowey in the south.

With the opening of this railway Sir Morton's business career closed. It had extended over a period of some forty-four years, and had it not been for the responsibility he assumed with regard to the London, Chatham and Dover Railway—adding to his ordinary business as a contractor the special one of a financier in aiding the company in their difficulties, and borrowing money for the company—the career of the firm would have closed in prosperity. One who worked for the firm wrote: 'With the exception of the bridge over the

St. Lawrence, I never heard, and quite certainly never knew, of any contract which was not a contract handsomely remunerative.' But in the case of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway extensions, as in that of the Victoria Bridge contract, Sir Morton could not foresee the severe financial panics which occurred, and which, as we have found, threw the money market into confusion, and in each case brought anxiety and loss. The firm were well served by their employés of all ranks. The agents-in-chief were Messrs. Baldwin, Curry, Crawford, F. and G. Giles, Hartland, Hodges, McKeone, Rose, Tate, and White. In arranging preliminaries with foreign Ministers the services of Messrs. Cockburn-Muir, Wallace, and Woolbert were employed, and Mr. Charles Christian was over the financial department. Sir Morton conducted the negotiations for and the settlement of the terms of the contracts, and made the financial arrangements incident thereto. Mr. Betts' part lay in the execution of the contracts — no one had a greater practical knowledge. We remember going over the Blackfriars Railway Bridge with him and noticing how his keen eye would fasten on a rivet missing. The firm relied on their staff, and the

agents were proud of their chiefs. With reference to the fruitless negotiations in Portugal, which cost the firm some £35,000, an agent wrote: 'The negotiations terminated with apparent satisfaction on both sides. There was, however, one thing with which no man had reckoned—that was Sir Morton Peto's indomitable and immovable determination to be honest and "square," and to give no bribes.'

Mr. Curry writes to the compiler: 'I often look back with pleasure to the nearly twenty-three years spent in your dear father's service, which was, I think, the happiest period of my life.'

Mr. R. Crawford's testimony is strong: 'Sir Morton was a man for whom I had not only the highest respect, but also a very much warmer feeling of regard, won from me by the kind and considerate treatment I received at his hands during the many years I was in his employment. His memory will always be cherished by me as that of an excellent employer, as well as one of the kindest among many kind friends that I have made throughout life.'

Mr. Rose writes of him as a 'life-long friend and benefactor, and whatever success I have met with in life has been mainly due to his generous kindness.'

One employed on the Houses of Parliament

wrote on Sir Morton's death: 'I possess a gold watch, kindly presented to me in 1846, inscribed, "A tribute of regard." Although so many years have passed away I feel prompted (through a feeling of respect) to write to you on this occasion.'

The workmen shared the same feeling as the agents. Mr. A. H. Baynes tells a story of a working man who remarked: 'Lowestoft was a poor place, sir, I can tell you, till my old master made it what it is.' 'Your old master—who was he?' said Mr. Baynes. 'Why, Sir Morton Peto, and the best I ever had. I worked for 'un fourteen years, eh!' and the old man sighed as he went to his work, saying, 'He wer a good master, he wer!' 'I am glad to hear that; Sir Morton is a friend of mine. I am going to dine with him next week,' was the reply. 'Be you now?' said the old man. 'How I would like to see 'un again. I'd lose a day's work, and walk a dozen miles, just to hev another look at 'un, that I would.'

In June, 1866, the late Rev. C. H. Spurgeon wrote Sir Morton: 'A little time ago I thought of writing to condole with you in the late tempests, but I feel there is far more reason to congratulate you than to sympathize. I have been all over England in all sorts of society, and I have never

heard a word spoken concerning you in connection with late affairs but such as showed profound esteem and unshaken confidence. I do not believe that this ever could have been said of any other man placed in similar circumstances. The respect and hearty sympathy which all sorts of persons bear towards you could never have been so well known to you as they now are by means of the past difficulties.'

Shortly before Sir Morton resigned his seat in Parliament, when he asked for a committee of the House of Commons to inquire into the allegations made against him in connection with the issue of shares and debenture stocks of the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, Lord Beaconsfield (then Mr. Disraeli) said he had recognised with admiration Sir Morton's enterprise and energy, and added: 'The House must also sympathize with an honourable member who has sat among us for so many years, and who has shown so many high qualities which entitle him to our respect.'

Mr. Gladstone, as Leader of the Opposition, endorsed the tribute paid to Sir Morton by the Leader of the House, and spoke of him as 'a man who has attained a high position in this country by the exercise of rare talents, and who has adorned that position by his great virtues.'

III.

IN PARLIAMENT.

Mr. Peto's political life began in July, 1847, by his becoming a candidate for Norwich; which city for forty years the Smith family had represented in the Whig interest. In his address Mr. Peto expressed his devotion to the cause of 'civil and religious liberty,' and added: 'It is my determination to govern my conduct on all occasions by a steady and consistent adherence to that principle; at the same time I disclaim all hostility to the Church of England.' He declared himself a 'Free Trader, being convinced that a safe and steady advance in the course of policy recently entered upon will tend fully to develop the resources of this great commercial country'; and in his opinion 'the best course of a statesman is by a steady and progressive reform to adapt the laws and institutions of the country to the ever-varying circumstances of the

nation.' The *Times* recommended his candidature, saying he had 'achieved a princely fortune by energy and strict integrity of character,' and was a most eligible candidate to revive the fortunes of the ancient city. His moderate views on Church and State, however, did not satisfy a considerable section of the Nonconformists, who induced the late Serjeant Parry to stand. The Conservatives were content to run one candidate, the late Duke of Wellington, then Marquis of Douro. The election would have been tranquil but for the zeal of navvies in the employ of Messrs. Peto and Betts on the Eastern Counties Railway, a large party of whom visited the city and attacked and wrecked Serjeant Parry's band. Their aggressiveness cost Mr. Peto £70. Two hundred, after regaling themselves freely, lost self-control and attacked Norwich men, armed with bludgeons. They were driven back, and forty of their number were injured. Further mischief was prevented by a *ruse;* the navvies were decoyed into a special train and conveyed Ely-wards with no means of return until after the election. The result of the poll was:

PETO - - -	2,448
MARQUIS OF DOURO -	1,727
PARRY - - -	1,572

In 1851 Mr. Peto seconded the Address. The proposer, the then Marquis of Kildare, spoke with brevity, the seconder at greater length. Mr. Peto thus gave his opinion of the Irish labourer: 'I know from personal experience that if you pay him well, and show him you care for him, he is the most faithful and hardworking creature in existence; but if you find him working for 4d. per day, and that paid in potatoes and meal, can we wonder that the results are as we find them? but give him legitimate occupation, and remuneration for his services, show him you appreciate those services, and you may be sure you put an end to all agitation. He will be your faithful servant and the loyal subject of his Sovereign.' On 'Free Trade' he said: 'With all that is so encouraging at home, there are evident symptoms of the general prevalence in foreign countries of sounder principles of international commerce; they are learning the lesson that it is better to buy economically than to manufacture expensively—they are learning that the merchants of England are the best customers in every market, and that our manufacturers are surpassed by none in skill and ingenuity. To illustrate the perfect certainty that such must be in the course of events the policy of every State, let

us take France and her iron trade. Her protective iron duties are now so high and of such comparative amount that she pays every five years the full value of purchase of every ironwork in the kingdom in her home consumption only. Is it not self-evident that it would be far more the policy of her people to receive our iron, and for us in treaty to take her light wines on lower duties, yielding to our exchequer larger revenue than from our present limited consumption, resulting from the almost prohibitive duties of the present tariff?'

The Address alluded to prevalent agricultural distress, and Mr. Peto, referring to the paragraph, said: 'No one can doubt that commerce has its ever-growing connection with the soil, and that by the substantial ties of property—and that the interests of all are identified; and also that the fact of distress existing calls for every practical sympathy to be shown—by the removing of every unequal burden which the friends of agriculture can show to press unfairly on its interests. While rejoicing in the fact of the alteration of the law, I cannot hesitate to express my wish that more time had been allowed to adjust the interests which had, under the old and vicious system, been placed in a false position. I have

shown the consumption is larger than ever; and I ask, then, if there is not solid ground for the belief that though there must be suffering in the transition, yet that agricultural interests will be based on a solid substantial foundation, and that it will hereafter depend on legitimate sources of prosperity, and that agriculturists will carry out their engagements with the sympathy of every class of the community, with no fear of distrust taking the place of mutual confidence, but with such a union of all the interests of the country as shall be the best guarantee of commercial greatness and domestic strength.'

In 1850 he obtained the passing of an Act of Parliament known as 'Peto's Act,' having for its object the devolution of the trust estate in the case of property held in trust for religious purposes, or for the promotion of education, as chapels, meeting-houses, etc., without any fresh conveyance, which has been of considerable use to Nonconformists.

In July, 1852, a General Election took place, and with Mr. Peto stood Mr. Edward Warner. 'Such a reception I never saw,' he wrote on his arrival at Norwich; 'we had 30,000 people at the very least, and St. Andrew's Hall crammed. I have succeeded in getting all parties to sign an

agreement not to bribe, and I do hope we shall get through it much better than I expected. All parties understand that not a shilling will be got from me.' The Conservative candidates were the Marquis of Douro and Lieutenant-Colonel Dickson. On the eve of the election he wrote: 'I cannot convey any idea of the very great enthusiasm. I never could have given a previous thought of anything of the kind. The whole city is in movement, and thousands of working men walk the streets to prevent bribery; not one shilling has been spent, and altogether nothing could be more gratifying; our friends have each worked as if the whole election depended on himself; all kind of business is at an end, and will be till after to-morrow.' The poll was declared as follows:

PETO - - -	2,186
WARNER - -	2,134
MARQUIS OF DOURO -	1,588
DICKSON - -	1,454

The Conservatives had expressed themselves confident of carrying their candidates, and presented a petition for an inquiry. It was withdrawn, and the attention of the House was called to the withdrawal, and a Committee appointed to report to the House. Mr. Peto was at the time in

Paris, and the late Mr. G. Hadfield, M.P., wrote him: 'Pray do not come unless we send for you. We are all quite satisfied that nothing has transpired in the slightest degree to affect your personal character, and that no motive ever existed in bringing forward the petition other than that, knowing your sensitive feeling as to bribery, they thought they could drive you to a compromise.' From complicity with the withdrawal the members were entirely freed by the Committee.

In the Session of 1854 Mr. Peto warmly supported the Payment of Wages Bill, to alter and amend the Truck Act. He said when first he became connected with public works the payment of money was the exception, and not the rule; but from twenty-five years' experience he could conceive no reason why there should be a departure from the rule that a man's wages should be paid in the current coin of the realm. The firm with which he was connected had employed in England, Canada, Denmark, Norway, and various parts of the Continent, 30,000 men, and they never paid wages other than in money, and always took care the men had it in sufficient time to derive the full benefit from it for their families. Let them make the Act as stringent as they might, they could not be doing an injustice,

as it was but right that an obligation should be discharged in the spirit in which it was incurred—by a proper payment at the proper time.

In the debate on the Church Rates Abolition Bill in the same Session, he stated his belief that the measure would benefit the Church, and said: 'If half the money which was expended on our cathedral establishments were devoted to city missions, to the augmentation of the incomes of the poorer clergy, and to the placing of clergymen where none at present existed, the Church of England would have a much stronger hold on the feelings and affections of the people of England, and the Dissenters, so far from regretting, would most heartily rejoice to see it, because by such means the cause of true religion would be advanced, and no interest whatever with regard to the Church would be sacrificed.' In another speech on the same Bill he said: 'The Church of England would more than in any other way cement the good feelings of the Dissenters to her. On the part of Dissenters he disclaimed all enmity and hostility to the Church. None would rejoice more than he should to see the Church prospering, and her revenues applied in the most beneficial manner.'

In December, 1854, when the firm of Peto and Betts undertook the construction of the railway in the Crimea, Mr. Peto exchanged the representation of Norwich for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds. 'I find,' he wrote in his valedictory address to his constituents, 'that by strict interpretation of the Act which incapacitates Members of Parliament from being concerned in any contract or commission on behalf of the Government I may have brought myself within the operation of the clauses, though I have not in any way infringed the true spirit or meaning of that Act. If I absented myself from the House I should avoid any legal inconvenience; but I feel that while such important questions are under consideration I should be wanting in duty to you by such a course, and I feel, therefore, no hesitation in returning to you the trust you have reposed in me, and this becomes the more imperative from the indefinite time in which I shall be engaged in carrying out those duties I have voluntarily undertaken.' 'After resigning,' Mr. Peto wrote, 'twenty of my constituents came to see if things cannot be altered; but it is done. Lord Aberdeen and the Duke of Newcastle were very kind.' The uncertainty of bye-elections was shown in this

instance, the late Sir Samuel Bignold, a Conservative, gaining the vacant seat with 1,889 votes against the Liberal candidate's (Mr. Hammond's) 1,629.

On the death of Sir W. Molesworth in 1855 Sir Morton was invited to stand for Southwark, but declined. In 1859 he was a candidate with the late Mr. Tom Duncombe for Finsbury, and was returned by a large majority over the late Mr. W. Cox, who had been Mr. Duncombe's colleague in the previous Parliament, the poll being:

T. S. Duncombe	-	8,538
Sir Morton Peto	-	8,174
Wm. Cox	-	4,556

The position he took in the Liberal Party is shown by the following extract from a letter of the same year: 'I am just in from the political meeting, which was a large one. Mr. Bright is acting very cordially, as is Mr. M. Gibson, and, indeed, all the Liberals but Mr. Roebuck, Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Horsman—several expressed regret I had not seconded the amendment, but I am quite satisfied.'

He took a more active part in Parliamentary life as member for Finsbury than when he represented Norwich. One Session his name is mentioned as a

speaker or questioner twenty, another twenty-two, times.

In the Session of 1861 he introduced the Bill regarding the Burial of Dissenters in Churchyards. 'I believe,' he said, 'that were the measure I ask leave to introduce to become the law of the land, one of the causes of offence now existing would be removed; and if the Church of England is to prosper, I am sure it can only be by the exercise of a large-minded, large-hearted charity; by the adaptation of itself to the spirit of the times, and by its seeking the good of the community at large, not by an exclusive action, but by an earnest co-operation in works of faith and labours of love with all those denominations of Christians who, while differing in forms of worship and ecclesiastical polity, are yet united in the belief that the Bible is the only rule of faith, and the revealed will of God, the only guide to fallible man.' He reminded the House that by the rubric three classes were excluded from Christian burial—the suicide, the excommunicated, and the unbaptized. He told the House that in his denomination those only were baptized who by credible evidence showed sincere repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and asked if members of his denomi-

nation should be included in the same category with the suicide and the excommunicated. He concluded his speech thus: 'The abolition of the Test Act and other measures have done much to create a better feeling, and I beseech the House not to hesitate in its onward course. What is the first book you place in the hands of your children which most interests them? Is it not the "Pilgrim's Progress" of John Bunyan? And yet the spirit which dictated this rubric imprisoned John Bunyan himself for twelve years in Bedford Gaol; and Nonconformists have their martyrology, as extensive in its chronicles as any that Fox ever wrote. But I rejoice that in the present day a better feeling exists. You do not value Milton's immortal works the less because they were written by a Baptist, and I beseech you to join with me in an effort to prevent our differences being exhibited at the grave, where at least we may hope the differences of life would be forgotten, and the mourners be permitted to resign to their last resting-place the precious remains of their friends in that way which would be most in consonance with their own feelings and those of the dead.'

The Bill, backed by Sir Morton, the late Sir F. Crossley and the late Lord Kinnaird, then the

Hon. A. Kinnaird, was read a first time. On the second reading, in April, it was rejected by 236 to 155 votes. In 1862 the Bill was reintroduced, and referred to a Select Committee, but, owing to the late period when it left the Committee, was withdrawn. In 1863 the Bill, altered in accordance with views expressed in Committee, was introduced by Sir M. Peto and Sir C. Douglas, but thrown out by a majority of 125—there being 221 votes against, and 96 for the second reading. Mr. Disraeli said he was 'perfectly ready to do justice to the character and motives of the hon. baronet who brings this measure before the House, but this measure is not to be decided by personal considerations.

Besides questions relating to the working classes and religious disabilities, Sir Morton took much interest in the subject of fortifications. With the late Mr. Bidder, C.E., he strongly deprecated expenditure on forts and wooden ships. 'A ship debate ensued,' said *Mr. Punch* in his 'Essence of Parliament,' 'and a good one; and the opinion of Sir J. Paxton, Sir Morton Peto, and other practical men, was strongly expressed against the wooden ships.' Hansard reports Sir Morton as advising the House that before spending further millions of money on

fortifications on Portsdown Hill, and batteries on all the sandbanks at the entrance of Portsmouth Harbour, a commission, composed of experienced, unprejudiced and practical men, should be appointed, not merely to consider the question of defending the existing dockyards, but the suitableness of those establishments to the altered circumstances of the nation. In his work on 'Taxation: Its Levy and Expenditure, Past and Present' (Chapman and Hall, 1865), he strongly advocated the building of iron ships, and in dockyards adapted for the purpose, and argued that by contracting with builders of unquestioned reputation, for the construction of iron hulls at fixed and certain prices, there would be much economy, and the present costly establishments in our dockyards might be greatly and permanently reduced. The yards would be used for the fitting and refitting of ships, and all the millions proposed to be sunk in fortifications for their protection would be saved. He went further, and advocated that some common accord should be come to to reduce the armaments, which in Sir Robert Peel's words 'belong to a state of war rather than of peace.'

In a debate on the Navy Estimates he declared, after visiting the dockyards, the system which had

grown up of making additions without plan or system was ruinous and unsound. A report of the debate says his speech made a great impression on the House, and the frequent cheers with which he was greeted showed the hold he had got on the feelings as well as the understanding of the House.

With his business Sir Morton found the representation of Finsbury brought too many calls on his time, and in November, 1864, he accepted an invitation to stand with the late Hon. F. H. F. Berkeley for Bristol at the next General Election. The rival candidate for the vacancy to be caused by the retirement of one of the sitting members, Mr. Gore Langton, was Mr. T. F. Fremantle, now Lord Cottesloe, and each candidate spoke at banquets on Colston's day. The *Times* of the day succeeding the dinners said: 'Sir M. Peto must show good reason why the Bristolians should not elect Mr. Fremantle, and the latter must prove that Sir M. Peto is a dangerous and unsuitable representative for Bristol. The necessity itself might excuse some invention: Sir Morton is a Dissenter, a builder of Baptist chapels, a man in business, and long associated with popular movements for good and philanthropic purposes.' Referring to Sir Morton's speech, 'most pleasant and instructive,' the leader concluded:

'The inference intended to be drawn from it is that Sir Morton will be the right man in the right place at Bristol. We entirely agree and adopt the conclusion without reserve. No doubt the two men are different in themselves, and will act with different bodies of men; but when it comes to political creeds and opinion, and to criticisms upon public affairs, difference becomes infinitesimal. No differential calculus will provide a phrase to distinguish between men whose absorbing feeling is intense admiration of their country and its peculiar institutions. Nay, if Sir M. Peto seems to start from an opposite point, his testimony is all the stronger, because without prejudice and the result of experience. They both love their country —their party indeed, but their country more; they are both honourable men. They both think it not so much a matter of this measure or that, this statesman or that, so long as England is true to her old character for honesty, patriotism, independence and good order.'

The election in July, 1865, was the last General one in which the system of public nominations and declarations of the poll took place. The nomination at Bristol was in the quadrangle of the Exchange, and the 'Blues' and the 'Reds' had

their armies marshalled by prize-fighters; the noise, confusion, and hand-to-hand encounters would have converted anyone wishful to retain the old arrangement. One supporter of Berkeley and Peto had a dead cat thrown in his face, one on the other side was covered with blue powder, and Mr. Fremantle, on his facing the electors, received a blow from a rotten egg. Sir Morton was fortunate in having a pillar behind which he could shelter himself. At the declaration on July 14 Mr. Fremantle did not appear; one such ordeal was enough. The numbers were:

HON. F. H. F. BERKELEY -	5,296
SIR M. PETO - - -	5,228
MR. T. F. FREMANTLE - -	4,269

The business troubles of the ensuing year prevented Sir Morton from taking the active part which had been his wont during the seventeen years he had successively represented Norwich and Finsbury, and led to his resigning his seat in 1868. His constituents had frankly accepted his explanation of the circumstances connected with the London, Chatham and Dover Railway, and had in public meeting thereafter given him a vote of sympathy. On his death, a quarter of a century later, the leading Bristol paper referred to him as a 'keen,

capable man of business and a strong Liberal,' and added, 'his connection with Bristol, though but a short episode in his long career, was one which many Bristolians will remember with interest.'

After he retired from Parliament he continued to take much interest in politics; and he had the satisfaction of seeing his policy with regard to the navy and fortifications carried out and the Burials Bill become law.

IV.

PERSONAL.

Mr. Peto in 1831 married his cousin Mary, eldest daughter of Thomas de la Garde Grissell, and sister of his then partner, Thomas Grissell. On the honeymoon they visited Oxford, Blenheim, Gloucester and Cheltenham. He wrote from the land of stone hedges, blue stockings and frocks: 'That finding a steam coach had been running from Cheltenham to Gloucester, we thought we would like to travel by steam. We found the steam coach only went about the rate of twelve miles an hour, and at the least declivity about four. We did not like going in the first coach, on the machinery, so we got into the one attached to it. We left Cheltenham at eleven, arrived at Gloucester five minutes past twelve—one hour, five minutes in going nine miles. We saw the cathedral,

pin manufactory, and Severn, and, as the steamer left at three, returned by coach. The charge was two shillings. We could not get up the hill out of Gloucester without stopping once; then we went on pretty well until the place about half-way where the water was taken in. The steam is not generated in one boiler, but in several small ones. One of them burst; the hot water ran into the fire. What with explosion, steam, smoke, and smell, I never was in anything like it. All were soon off the coach, and we were soon out of it. Fortunately no harm was done; but we were left to get home as we could. The passengers were obliged to walk four or five miles, but, happy fellow! I had a wife. A coach-load of electors returning from an election took in my wife, but as she could not go without her helpmate, took him in also.'

Mr. Peto's first home in married life was in Albany Terrace, York Road, Lambeth. The house is now joined by a bridge with the opposite house. The home was broken up early in 1842 by the death of his wife, who left three daughters and one son surviving. A second son named after his father died shortly before his mother.

Mr. Peto married on July 12, 1843, Sarah Ainsworth, daughter of the late Mr. Henry Kel-

sall, of Rochdale. In the summer of that year he lived at Theobalds, Herts, spending the winter at Albany Terrace, which was the town-house but for a short time, as he took a lease of 47, Russell Square, where all the elder children issue of this marriage were born. In the summer of the next year Bracondale, a house on the Carrow side of Norwich, and about a mile from the city, was taken because of its nearness to the Eastern Counties Railway Works, and in the autumn of the year Somerleyton was purchased by Mr. Peto from the late Lord Sidney Godolphin Osborne. Somerleyton underwent great changes under its new owner. The gardens were laid out under Mr. Nessfield's supervision; the house was rebuilt, and afterwards much enlarged, the late John Thomas being the architect. Thomas had begun life as a stonemason. He was one day occupied in carving the supporters of the Queen's coat-of-arms over a shop in Birmingham, when the late Sir Charles Barry, the architect of King Edward III.'s Grammar School in that town, noticed his talent, and had him employed on the Grammar School. Sir Charles then introduced him to Mr. Peto, who made use of him as a sculptor for the work at the Houses of Parliament. For Mr. Betts he afterwards

designed Preston Hall. To Messrs. Peto and Betts Thomas was much indebted for his success in his profession. Mr. Peto took great interest in the improvements at Somerleyton. He wrote: 'On some parts of the estate the views are really delightful; the part near Fritton Lake is equal to any part of the Virginia Water. We shall be able to add greatly to the value by our planting, and there are many little improvements which will greatly interest us to carry out, not at large cost.' The addition of a winter-garden did not take place till some twelve years after the acquisition of the property. The village—one of the prettiest of model villages—was first rebuilt.

Soon after his second marriage Mr. Peto joined the Baptist denomination. When in Norwich he had frequently attended the late Rev. William Brock's chapel, and his letters testify to his enjoyment of the minister's sermons. In his plans to benefit the navvies on the Eastern Counties Railway Mr. Brock heartily joined. Commodious halls were built, capable of being moved onward as the works advanced; publications and books were provided for the men's leisure hours; a railway mission account was opened at the Norwich Bank, upon which Mr. Brock had liberty to draw. He

was wont to say the missionaries at work under him were the best set of men he ever knew. 'From our people,' wrote Mr. Peto, 'I hear a good account of all the missionaries. A chapel has been erected at Brandon; Mr. Brock preached the opening sermon; I never saw a more interesting meeting. We went afterwards and saw a poor fellow who had been greatly injured on the works; he had been regularly visited by the missionary every day; he seems in the most hopeful state of mind; there is no prospect of his recovery.' In a later letter he wrote: 'I saw the Bishop on the platform with Mrs. Stanley this morning—he received me most kindly—he hoped in the autumn that he should be at Norwich and have the pleasure of a more intimate acquaintance; he is just leaving for his visitation, and then to London. At leaving he took me aside, and said: "Mr. Peto, I cannot part without expressing to you, as the Bishop of this diocese, the great obligation you have laid me under in your care of the spiritual interest of the poor men on the line. I have anxiously watched all that has been done, and I can assure you all has my most sincere approbation and approval." I of course expressed my great satisfaction that it had met his lordship's

approbation, the more so as I felt the liberality and Christian feeling which dictated the remark, as I was conscious we differed on what many esteemed questions of importance.'

On the occasion of opening upwards of 80 miles of the Eastern Counties Railway, the Bishop of Norwich said: 'Mr. Peto was a Dissenter, and he envied the sect to which he belonged the possession of such a man; he would gladly purchase him at his own price, and heartily he prayed that he would erelong become a member of the Church of England. He was a Churchman, and holding high office in the Church, and he believed that in that Church was the purest faith; but he was still a Catholic Christian, and as such would hold it as a dereliction of his duty if he did not express his approbative respect and regard for the exertions used for the moral benefit of the railway labourers by Mr. Peto. All down the line he had met with his agents, and had found them not merely giving direction and instruction, but also giving to the men religious and school books for the education of themselves and their children, and thus showing them that education can civilize the mind, reform the habits, and elevate the understanding. The gin-shops were left deserted, and the schools were

full. The good and exemplary conduct of Mr. Peto's railway labourers under this system deserved to be a tale told three times three with one cheer more; and let it be recorded as a fact, of which there could be no denial, that not one labourer in the Norwich district had been guilty of misconduct that made him amenable to the law.' The allusion of the Bishop to the orderly conduct of Mr. Peto's labourers was corroborated by the Dean of Ely at a subsequent part of the proceedings. 'For,' said he, 'in my district I have never had so little criminal magisterial business during the period I have had a seat on the Bench as during the progress of the works on the Eastern Counties Railway under Mr. Peto, although for a period of two years 3,000 of his men have been in my immediate vicinity.' *

By laymen, too, his care for the navvies has been appreciated. John Francis, in his 'History of the English Railway, 1820-45,' vol. ii., says: 'To the honour of Mr. Peto, by whom thousands of this class were employed, some attempt was made to humanize them. He was careful in his selection of overseers. He always paid his wages weekly in money, and boldly avowed that no contractor, who understood his own interest or his obligations to

* *Illustrated London News*, February 8, 1851.

his men, would do otherwise. Attention was paid to their religious instruction. Clergymen and Scripture-readers were induced to visit them. He provided them with barracks to lodge in; he introduced habits of thrift and carefulness; he encouraged them in joining sick-clubs, and gave large sums to induce them. No one who could read was without a Bible. The consequence was that men stayed with him fourteen or fifteen years; that drunkenness was uncommon; and that though dissoluteness of mind and manner was impossible utterly to prevent, there was but little among the large number employed by Mr. Peto.' And in a note he adds: 'Mr. Grissell, who earnestly assisted his partner in his endeavour to ameliorate the evils of the railway labourer, relates with zest the difficulties they experienced in commencing as contractors,' and that Mr. Peto succeeded in winning over Mr. Bidder to aid them. Mr. Francis relates in his work that the custom prevailed among railway companies of letting large portions of their works to contractors, who divided their respective portions among others with smaller capital, who again, subletting their part of the works to a minor class as much labourers as contractors, engaged other workmen, assisted in

their operations, shared in their toils, but disregarded their welfare when the work was over. In many cases the men were paid their wages monthly, in some not so often—when new men were engaged they could only live by assistance from their employers. This led to the truck system, the advances being made by orders on a shop, in exchange for which the labourer received inferior provisions at an exorbitant price; against each man an account was kept, and on the pay-day he received the balance due. This balance, being necessarily small, was soon dissipated, and the 'navigator' had no other resource. The same demand for advances arose, the same issue of tickets occurred, the same extortion followed. The man was maintained by credit, and improvident habits were contracted simultaneously. Lord Beaconsfield in 'Sybil' bears strong testimony to the evils of the truck system.

In a letter of 1846, before he entered the House, Mr. Peto writes: 'I had a note from Sir George Grey asking my advice as to the best mode of imparting sound Scriptural instruction to the railway men, so I called on him this morning and had a most interesting conversation with him and Sir Harry Verney. I thought it my duty to speak

out as to the practice of contractors in not paying in *money*, and paying only the balance of cash every five or six weeks; they were much struck, and made me promise to breakfast with them next week to meet Lord Ebrington and several M.P.'s, and the matter is to be brought before the House of Commons next week, and a Committee applied for, before which I have promised to give evidence. I shall get the ill-will of every contractor, but for this I care nothing. I am serving the poor fellows, and promoting the cause of morality. Mr. Stephenson, Mr. Bidder, Mr. Hudson, and all my friends stick by me in the movement; now I have less to do, I must do more in another, and I trust better way.' And in a later letter he says: 'I breakfasted with Sir G. Grey, Hon. Mr. Bouverie, Lord Ebrington, B. Hawes (afterwards Sir. B. Hawes), and one other M.P. I persuaded them to confine their attempt this Session to one object, viz., the payment in *money* and *weekly*, but to obtain power to inquire into every other grievance under which they were suffering. I told them I did not see my way to compulsory religious instruction, and I am somewhat surprised to find all agree with me. Sir G. Grey said since his last interview with me he had applied to the Bishop of

Durham as to appointing Scripture-readers in Northumberland, but his lordship said he could only sanction regularly appointed clergymen, which Sir G. Grey feels to be useless, as he sees with me they cannot meet the feelings and gain the confidence of the men. I felt truly glad he had made this application, as he now sees that my statement is thoroughly borne out, and as I had felt it right to say I was a Dissenter, it is the more gratifying that he is not relying on me only, but is convinced from the result of his own inquiries.'

Mr. Peto was himself very appreciative of good preaching; when with his mother he always accompanied her to church in the morning, and she when able went with him to chapel in the evening. His standard was high, and in one letter he says: 'I went to hear Mr. S. this morning; he is a good man, but his sermon was not much above what we could call very mediocre, and I don't believe he would get £30 per annum in our denomination.' The Rev. W. Brock had, on Mr. Peto's first candidature for Norwich, strongly supported Serjeant Parry, and his conduct had been severely criticised in the press, letters being written to him from many Nonconformists disapproving of his conduct. Mr. Brock feared Mr. Peto's friend-

ship would not bear the strain, but was relieved when on the day of the chairing he had a letter from the successful candidate: 'I can assure you, my beloved friend, that nothing can alter, or has in the slightest degree altered, my affection. I have nothing to complain of so far as you are concerned; and I beg to assure you I have never, in thought or word, done you any injustice.' Mr. Peto showed by act as well as word he had no ill-feeling, for in the next year he urged Mr. Brock to accept the pastorate of Bloomsbury Chapel, which had been built with funds he supplied. Before Mr. Brock entered on his ministry Mr. Peto wrote: 'I think he should get two months' rest before he comes to Bloomsbury and takes the services regularly—nothing like beginning well and keeping on quietly. I think first impressions always very important.'

In philanthropic work generally Mr. Peto took a deep interest. 'You must blame Lord Ashley,' he writes, 'for laying violent hands on me last night for the opening of a new and large Ragged School near Field Lane. I sent the report; the meeting was most interesting.' The Essex Hall Idiot Asylum was indebted to him for its establishment, as he lent money for the purchase of the land, and for

ten years contributed £200 per annum, and then gave £2,750 to enable it to pay off a mortgage. The Haverstock Hill Orphan Working School, the Earlswood Idiot Asylum, and the institution at Reedham for fatherless children, received his warm support. 'I am staying in the city for the Idiot Asylum Dinner,' says another letter. 'I feel much interest in the institution, and as I am up I go. . . . The dinner went off capitally. I felt that to begin their new building it was very important to do all we could. I engaged to double our subscription of £200 for five years. We collected nearly £4,000.'

He was a deacon of Bloomsbury Chapel, and a regular attendant at church-meetings when in town. 'I think,' he writes, 'nearly all the advantages of church-membership are lost in London, where parties *co-operate* so little together for their mutual edification and in promoting the kingdom of their Lord.'

Bloomsbury Chapel under Mr. Brock's pastorate had a very prosperous career, and £18,000 was repaid by the church to Mr. Peto, who expended it in the purchase of the Diorama in Regent's Park, and its conversion into Regent's Park Chapel. 'You will be greatly pleased,' wrote Mr. Peto to his wife, 'with Thomas's design for the interior of the

Diorama. It is one of the best I ever saw, and it will make a very nice chapel. In the plans I am making it to hold not more than Bloomsbury, taking away the second gallery and putting the children at the back, and leaving children's galleries to be built if ever wanted.'

Of the scheme of building chapels in the Metropolis he was a stanch supporter. 'We will contribute,' he writes, '£500 the next three years, *i.e.*, £1,500.' He laid the foundation-stone of the Metropolitan (Mr. Spurgeon's) Tabernacle. While doing his utmost for his own denomination, he showed, by his restoration of his parish church at Somerleyton, that he had no wish it should prosper at the expense of the Church of England.

To the Communion being restricted to members of his own denomination he was strongly opposed, and felt very glad at the defeat of the supporters of close Communion in the 'Norwich Chapel Case.'

In 1849, at the conclusion of the lawsuit deciding that the Unitarians had no right to share in the benefits of the Lady Hewley Trusts, he was appointed a trustee, and remained one till his death, taking, after his retirement from business, a very active part in its administration.

He was also a member of the Court of the Fishmongers' Company, and a director of the Rock Life Assurance Society. For twenty-one years he was treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Society. He defrayed the expenses of five deputations to India, West Africa, and Jamaica. The result of the deputation to Jamaica was the extinguishment of a debt of £9,000.

In 1849 the scheme of the Great Exhibition of 1851 was started. A royal commission had been appointed, and an executive committee formed. The cost was gone into, and the best site selected; then arose the most pressing question—how the funds were to be provided. 'The suggestion,' says the late Sir H. Cole, in his 'Fifty Years of Public Work,' 'came from Lord Granville; the next offer from Mr. Peto, who said he would be ready for £20,000. One commissioner repented of having given a guarantee, and with long face went about saying: "The Government ought to bear the loss, even £50,000 and more." On July 12,' continues Sir H. Cole, 'as I was passing Mr. Peto's office, in Great George Street, the following conversation took place:

'He asked me: "How is the guarantee getting on?"

'I replied: "Not at all; everybody is afraid to begin."

'S. M. P.: "Recollect, I am quite ready to act when the time arrives."

'H. C.: "The time has arrived, and you will do good service by beginning it."

'S. M. P.: "I am going down to Lowestoft to-night, and shall be back in a fortnight."

'H. C.: "That will be a fortnight lost, and time is most precious."

'S. M. P.: "Do you feel confident that if I offer to do anything it will be acceptable?"

'H. C.: "Quite confident; what you intend to do, do directly."

'S. M. P.: "Then come with me to the Reform Club, and I will write a letter to Colonel Grey."

'We went at once to the writing-room of the Reform Club, and Mr. Peto wrote the following letter:

'Reform Club, July 12, 1850.

'"SIR,

'"Having, as a member of the Finance Committee, had occasion to confer with Lord Granville on the subject of providing a guarantee fund towards carrying out the Great Exhibition of Industry of all Nations in 1851, and understanding

that the subject is likely to be discussed by the Royal Commission to-morrow, I request you to have the kindness to communicate to H.R.H. Prince Albert, the president of the committee, my desire to promote the Exhibition, and that I am willing, on behalf of myself and friends, to guarantee the sum of £50,000, or, if necessary, to advance the same for the purposes of the Exhibition. I take this course as I am compelled to leave town to-morrow from indisposition.

'"I have the honour to be, etc.,

'"S. MORTON PETO.

'"P.S.—Perhaps I might take the liberty of saying that I consider the success of the Exhibition would be considerably increased by the adoption of Mr. Paxton's plan, if it is not too costly."'

Sir H. Cole received the following reply:

'Buckingham Palace,
July 12, 1850.

'SIR,

'I lost no time in submitting your letter to the Prince, and cannot obey his commands as to the answer better than by copying the words in which they are conveyed: "Pray thank Mr. Peto

at once in the warmest terms for his public spirit and readiness to support us in our difficult task by this spontaneous and most liberal offer."

'I have the honour to be, sir,

'Your most obedient servant,

'C. GREY.'

The guarantee, Sir Henry relates, was started brilliantly, and before long about £350,000 was subscribed, and the Bank of England preferred to make the necessary advances on smaller sums. He says in his diary: 'The Prince came into Grey's room, and, as his manner often was, sat upon the table. I related the details of Peto's guarantee; the Prince applauded it as a most useful thing in having stirred up others. He said now was the time for work; it was not plans that were wanted.' The guarantee was the subject of much comment, and Lord Overstone called on Mr. Taylor, Sir Morton's solicitor, and was shown that the guarantor was worth between £600,000 and £700,000. Mr. Peto was subsequently appointed one of her Majesty's Commissioners for the exhibition.

In the spring of 1854 the home was changed from 47, Russell Square to 12, Kensington Palace

Gardens. In the ensuing year, on his retirement from Parliament, he received his baronetcy. The first intimation he received of the intended honour was thus conveyed:

'War Department,
'Feb. 1, 1855.

'My dear Mr. Peto,

'Lord Aberdeen has at my request recommended to the Queen that you should be made a baronet, and her Majesty has been graciously pleased to approve of the proposal. I hope this honour will be as agreeable to you and your family as I am sure it is well deserved.

'For the public-spirited manner in which you came forward to assist me with the Balaklava railroad, and thereby lost your seat in Parliament, I am most grateful; but your previous career and public conduct in the development of many a great undertaking would at any time have justified this mark of distinction at the hand of the Sovereign. Wishing you many years of happiness and prosperity,

'I am, my dear Mr. Peto,
'Yours most sincerely,
'Newcastle.'

In reply to the Duke, Mr. Peto expressed himself

thus: 'That you should feel any satisfaction in the mode your wishes have so far been carried out is to me an ample return for any trouble I have taken; but the mode in which you expressed your feelings by mentioning favourably my name to the Sovereign through the Earl of Aberdeen, and its result in the honour conferred, leaves me unable to express my sense of your kindness; and my feeling that you have far over-valued anything I can have done is rendered much stronger by the kind expressions in your letter conveying to me the intimation of your proposal, and of the honour conferred on me in consequence.'

The *Times* of February 10 said: 'The public will learn with satisfaction that her Majesty's Government, in appreciation of Mr. Peto's services, and more especially of his recent disinterested and patriotic conduct in retiring from the representation of Norwich to carry out the construction of the railway from Balaklava originated by the Duke of Newcastle, has recommended him to the Queen for a baronetcy, which will be immediately conferred upon him.' The conferring of the title was announced in the London *Gazette* of February 16.

Later in the year Sir Morton Peto had to make journeys to Portugal and Algeria, and his letters

show both his keen observation and his appreciation of scenery.

'I got up this morning,' he writes, 'at four o'clock, and was on deck an hour before the ship entered the Tagus. The sky cloudless, and the view most lovely. The mountain at Cintra, some 3,000 feet high, with its clear outline against the sky, was a beautiful object; and the sides of the Tagus, the *quintas* by the seaside amidst groves and gardens, made the view on each side very interesting.' He thus describes his journey:

'The only mode of travelling in the interior is on mules. You meet continually a Portuguese gentleman on his well-fed mule, and his servant behind him with his leather portmanteau in front, the hat-box on one side, and a basket of necessaries of life on the other. The usual pace of travelling is four miles per hour. They start at this season (July) at four o'clock, and travel till nine, rest till three, and travel till eight. The *hospedarias*, or hotels, are most miserable—worse than any sixth-rate inn or public-house in England. Of course, the charge is very small for the accommodation. I generally travel five hours in the morning and five hours in the afternoon. I found it fatiguing the first day, but not afterwards. It is very hot in

the sun in the middle of the day, but cool and delightful in the mornings and evenings. The rooms are kept nearly dark, and the thermometer is scarcely ever so high as 80 degrees. The country is fertile to a degree I never saw, and where they irrigate the crops are magnificent. At this season it is always fine: they get no rain for five months. Just now the harvest operations are going on. The wheat is all cut with the sickle, and taken at once to the threshing-floor, where it is trod out by oxen, or more usually by some fourteen to eighteen horses in a string running in a circle.

'The views are often very singularly beautiful. On looking down from the mountains over the pine-forests and olive-plantations in the valleys, and the many winding rivers, your view is very striking. The atmosphere is so clear, you can generally see from some forty to fifty miles. But amidst all this beauty the habitations of man are most miserably dirty; the people have no ideas of cleanliness and comfort. I shall be obliged to provide habitations for our men, and hospitals and convenient arrangements everywhere. I never saw a country in which it is probable that railways will make so great a change. When you get sixty miles from Lisbon the value of things is almost nominal from the cost

of transport, and it is only when you get to within thirty or forty miles of the Tagus and the sea they have any outlet for their produce.'

In another letter he writes: 'I am tired of staying, to a degree you cannot conceive. No one is left in Lisbon, and after my day's work I walk every evening to the same little garden, and sit alone and think of home and my loved ones there. The evenings are delightful and the moon full, and until nine o'clock, when the dew begins to fall freely, it is indeed beautiful. It is a relief to get away from business and sit in the cool evenings and think of other days and other scenes.'

In March, 1857, he was in Algeria, and went to Philippville and Constantine. Six days after leaving England he wrote from the former place, after sixty-two hours at sea: 'The post leaves in half an hour; I have only time for a hasty line. We landed on a glorious morning, warm as summer. Our ship lay close to a mountain 2,000 feet high, clothed to nearly the top with verdure—certainly a more beautiful sight I never saw. The plants are in perfection: a beautiful white erica, in exquisite bloom, growing in some places ten to twelve feet hign; wild cactus, rhubarb, asparagus and cork-trees, myrtles and prickly pears, and a host of

plants which, with my limited knowledge of botany, I knew nothing of.'

His love of architecture equalled his love of scenery. In an earlier journey in France he wrote: 'I have been greatly pleased with the line and the country, particularly Chartres. It has one of the oldest cathedrals in France, and one of the most beautiful. The carving and the stained glass were beyond any I ever saw.' And we remember his warm admiration for Axel Haig's etching of the interior of the cathedral at Chartres.

At Algiers, in 1860, some of the calls he made gave him the opportunity of seeing the interiors of the old Moorish houses. 'The Governor-General,' he writes, 'inhabits the old town and country house of the Dey of Algiers, and such exquisite work of imitation of lace I never saw. I was very much pleased with Constantine, but this is very superior.'

In 1860 he made up his mind to part with Somerleyton, and in the following year he wrote: 'It is right to be prudent and careful, and not bring reproach. I enclose you an abstract, very carefully prepared, of our expenditure the last five years. It is, as I expected, about £15,000 a year. I have asked Mr. H. to separate the cost of

carriages from the stabling. He has included in the rent and taxes some taxes which belong to the house at Somerleyton; I have told him to separate these also. My own idea is to move in the early part of next year, but I wish to do nothing in haste. The subscriptions are the annual ones and donations, but do not include special affairs, such as Diorama, Bloomsbury, etc. I trust we shall be directed in the right path. If we look singly to Him for His guidance and blessing, He will give us both. I must not repine, but take courage and work hard, and do my best and cultivate a grateful and thankful state of feeling.'

In September, 1865, he was one of a party which visited the United States. He saw New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Chicago, and also visited Canada. The Victoria Bridge at Montreal, which he saw for the first time, he wrote, 'very far exceeded all I had expected; all our party were impressed in the same way.' With Boston he was greatly pleased, and with the people he met there. 'The public buildings and parks are very fine indeed, and I was much surprised to find that during the war all the public buildings in hand were continued, and that 700 new houses of the kind now building

in the Bayswater Road had been added to the city in the last four years.'

In another letter he says: 'Nothing can exceed the attention with which we have been received. I never met such courtesy and kindness in any country before. They all seemed to emulate each other to make our visit as pleasant as possible. There is, no doubt, a good deal of feeling about the *Alabama*—the only point of soreness I can detect. With the Irish element here the English are unpopular; but Mr. Thurlow Weed told me, and General Hooper also, that it was the earnest wish of all cultivated Americans to preserve the alliance between the two countries.'

From Chicago he wrote: 'Three weeks to-day since we left Liverpool, and we have travelled besides 3,000 miles of sea, 1,600 of railway, and have seen so much it appears more like three months. We have not had to pay a single hotel bill since New York.' Later: 'I have very much enjoyed my trip. I have endeavoured to throw aside all prejudice, and to find out what is really good and worthy of value, and I confess there is very much worth notice and regard, with very much I do not like. Still, we are not here so much to criticise as to learn what is the real con-

dition of the great people and country.' 'In a Republic we cannot expect to find so much which we desire to have imitated in England as to feel what is the real feeling towards England, and what is likely to be the future of America. We have been to Washington; there we saw the President, and were received most courteously and kindly. We found him in a very plain room with a secretary, signing 'Pardons,' and with no more pomp than I should receive a person on business in Great George Street. He is decidedly an intellectual and agreeable man, with much force of character. We were introduced by Governor Walker. The President shook hands with us all, and welcomed us to America; he talked for half an hour in the most pleasant, friendly way, but every word was well chosen; he showed a most intimate acquaintance with all that was transpiring in the country. I read one of the 'Pardons,' which simply required the party to take the oath of allegiance to the Union of the Sates, and *never to hold* a slave, or, in the event of so doing, to forfeit the pardon. After the most friendly talk we all left with extremely pleasant impressions of our visit. We went to the Treasury. Some 600 young women were acting as clerks, doing the

duty admirably, and keeping the accounts of the Government in the clearest and most intelligible form—we could not help wishing for simply the same thing in the Bank of England.'

Of Philadelphia he writes: 'I admire it more than any other city in America. At dinner we met General Meade, who gained the battle at Gettysburg, which did much to decide the fate of the war: he is most agreeable.' He also met General Grant, of whom he writes: 'He is such a remarkably quiet man. He does not talk much on any subject. He put me very much in mind of the Emperor Napoleon, as he seems rather to endeavour in everything to draw the person into conversation, taking as little part in it himself as possible.'

It may be remarked that what Sir Morton noticed as to the Emperor Napoleon and General Grant we might say of him. He had not great powers of conversation, but he was more than an excellent listener; he had the art of making those 'easy' with whom he conversed, fulfilling Swift's test of 'good manners'; his remarks were always fitting, and his genial manner and interest led on a better talker, and after a pleasant hour in his room we have felt how much of the pleasure was due to the

host, who apparently took a minor part, but really had given the tone to and directed the course of the conversation.

The year following came his most serious business troubles, and not till 1867 was he freed from them; they led to his giving up his new town house in Kensington Palace Gardens which had been built for him, and to Mr. Betts' leaving Preston Hall, in which, with its gardens and home farm, he had taken much pleasure. They both had to start anew. Mr. Betts continued in town, and Sir Morton journeyed to Pesth.

On arriving at Pesth Sir Morton wrote to those at his then home, Chipstead Place, Sevenoaks: 'I left with very mingled feelings. I earnestly pray that you may all be comforted with that comfort which He gives to His own children in their severest trials. This city puts me in mind very much of the Western cities in America—very large and fine houses in all directions pushing out the old ones; only the Americans take their old ones away on wheels, and these could only be destroyed.'

His life at Pesth was very quiet compared to the one he had hitherto lived. 'I get access to very good English literature at the Club. I generally, after my day's work, go there and read

quietly for three hours or so. I get there also the *Illustrated London News*, the *Athenæum*, *Saturday Review*, etc.; so I am in that respect not badly off; but I often go from four to five nights and do not speak to a person. There are a great many standard English works in the library. I have been very greatly struck with Mr. Gladstone's meeting of the details of the Irish Church Bill, and he has throughout kept his temper with much to excite and annoy.' In another letter he says: 'I have been much struck in reading Bunsen in regard to his constant looking up to God for guidance. Seeley's "Expansion of England" is one of the most thoughtful books I have seen for a long time.' Referring to a letter of the late Rev. C. M. Birrell: 'I read it several times to-day, but I shall read it again when we meet. He combines the Christian and refined gentleman. I only knew it in one instance in the same degree, *i.e.*, Mr. Joseph Tritton, and I felt after my last visit to Blomfield I had lost much in not cultivating his friendship more; and this letter of Mr. Birrell makes me feel the same in regard to him. If spared in God's good guidance to return to England again to reside, I feel deeply in the evening of life I must endeavour to avoid the error. For our-

selves and our dear ones we cannot be too much in contact with minds and hearts like theirs.'

Before settling down again in England, three years were spent abroad. Then from 1873 to 1875 Cowley House, Exeter, was the home; the summer of 1875 was spent at Stargrove, near Newbury; in 1876 The Hollands, Yeovil, was rented; from 1877 to 1884 he resided at Eastcote House, Pinner; in 1884 he moved to Blackhurst, Tunbridge Wells, where, with the exception of two winters at Cannes, he resided till the end of his life.

It may be said that his home-life only strictly commenced after his leaving business, for with that tie and his Parliamentary duties, and philanthropic work in addition, the hours spent at home were not many in comparison with those spent elsewhere. It was rarely that the breakfast-table at Palace Gardens had not some guest, invited or uninvited, who knew it was his only chance of a word with Sir Morton. He was always attached to children. In a letter written while the Eastern Counties contract was undertaken, he said in reference to 'little H.': 'I could not spare much time, but I could not resist his solicitations to play one game of ninepins with him on the table, he having bought them with a shilling I gave him;' and in a letter written

from Blackhurst in 1885, referring to a grandson: 'R. is a very good boy, gives no trouble, and he feels quite at home and amuses himself wonderfully. He is now building a house, and the foundations are nearly done, and he asked H. to lay the first stone. She excused herself, and L. is to do it and make the speech.' Another letter, referring to the same grandchild, brings out his strong wish that the characters of those dear to him should be conspicuous by self-reliance: 'I think his having to rely so much on himself alone for amusement has been a good thing, for it has made him much more self-reliant. I asked him a few days since if he did not feel sometimes dull. He replied: "Grandfather, I find it very difficult to get through all I have to do in the day." I find him very quick in calculation. We often play bagatelle, and he seldom makes a mistake in adding up the numbers. I consider, so far as I can judge, he has beyond an average of ability to learn, and he reasons for himself on facts in rather a striking way.'

After receiving the baronetcy Sir Morton wrote to his eldest son: 'It is right I should say to you, in confidence, I shall make no difference in property between you and your brothers, and my desire will

be to see you take some honourable profession. You know, my dear boy, my only spring of action is great love for you and your brothers, and that in all I do this must be considered by you as the principle on which I act.' He wrote to the same son, after an examination: 'You did quite right to make the attempt. You might have taken a higher position another year, but it would not have been so honourable to you as your success this year;' and in a later letter: 'I wish you to have such a sum as I can afford you, and that will enable you to feel comfortable about your expenditure. I have so much confidence in you that I feel assured you will always tell me what you really want, and will use whatever you need in the way which will be right.'

This last letter illustrates the trait in Sir Morton's character which gained the affection and confidence of all connected with him by family or business relations; whenever he gave his confidence he gave it without reservation. 'I know,' he wrote to a son, 'you will do the right thing in the right way at the right time. I need not say you have more, if possible, than my entire confidence, and all the love a father can have for a dear son.' He was exceptionally happy in his home-life. He was

never known to use any expression of regret for the past, but enjoyed the quiet of home and the society of his children. He felt that the past had been unsettled, and the only effect it had was to confirm his peace of mind, and help him to look forward to the future with complete complacency.

On leaving Cowley House he wrote: 'I feel if we make another move it ought to be the last, so that your mother and I could sit down quietly to end the span of life yet allotted to us by our heavenly Father.' In a birthday letter to a son he wrote: 'I need not say, I am sure, how much I feel of comfort and happiness amidst all my anxiety, in regard to my dear children;' and in another letter: 'I often feel how grateful I should be that none of my children have been a cause of unhappiness, and that all have done so well.' The mainstay of his character was his religion. A friend wrote of him after his death: 'Amid all his trials he was so resigned, and never lost the dignity of a spirit at rest with itself, whatever material changes might come.' 'This life,' wrote Sir Morton, 'is a continued scene of trial, and it is well for us it is so, for our constant temptation is to make it our rest; and all these changes tend, when rightly directed, to make us look beyond, and to feel we

must seek in every trial to find in it the blessing in disguise.' Again: 'I thought you would like a copy of the Revised New Testament, and I wish to give you, as a birthday gift, not only what you would most value, but something you would not cease to use. An ordinary book, however interesting, read and put on the shelf does not fulfil these conditions. I wish you many happy returns of your birthday, and that each one may find you happier than the preceding, and that you may attain ripe old age, having spent a life of usefulness, happy in yourself, and made the cause of happiness to many others.'

The last remark recalls Sir Morton's utter unselfishness. The one who was most with him wrote: 'His patient, cheerful diligence in doing little things for the good and pleasure of others when the former means for strength and great things were gone was remarkable; he never complained, but went about the lesser things with as much zeal as if he had been dealing with thousands instead of units. If he read a book of special interest, he would at once order a number of copies, and himself send them where he thought they would be most useful, and to those who had not the means to spend even a little in such a direction.' He well

illustrated Rothe's saying—'To take pleasure in the smaller things of life is the noble privilege not only of childhood, but of misfortune.' His thoughtfulness for others was always without reproach. A writer in the public press said of him when his career was at its zenith, and it was calculated that one-seventh of the leading railways had been constructed by him: 'His demeanour to his inferiors is as unobtrusive and considerate as his bearing to his equals is courteous, polished, self-possessed.'

Sir Morton impressed people very much by his dignified bearing. One who was for several years engaged in the negotiations of his firm writes: 'The first time I saw Mr. Peto was in 1851, in a committee-room of the House of Commons (Private Bill). I was then a sucking engineer just out of my articles, and present as adjutant to the chief-engineer of the Bill, the preamble of which was exquisitely mauled by Mr. Serjeant Talbot, whose power of satire was a "caution." Mr. Peto was in Parliament; he had come in from the House, being the contractor, to hear the fun. How his eyes twinkled and flashed! I have seen women with eyes, but never a man with eyes as his. In those days there still survived the tradition of dandyism among men of distinction, when such men as

Bulwer Lytton, Disraeli, etc., made it a study to dress well. I have often thought that the dignified, courtly presence of Mr. Peto in those days, enhanced by his exquisitely-frilled shirt, diamond pin, and faultless coat with velvet facing, was a sort of index of the magnificent style and elevation of the whole manner of his firm and of their staff—dignified, yet not extravagant.'

In a letter from America, after remarking on the free mode of addressing superiors by inferiors, Sir Morton added: 'There are good points also; *e.g.* at the engine-works (Meadsville, Ohio), the engine No. 100 is called "Sir Morton Peto." I asked the superintendent to accept 500 dollars for the 500 workmen. He said: "Pray do not offer it; they feel a pride in having made the engine and calling it after you, and would be *hurt* to find anything left for them." Now, in England if I had not done it I should have been thought a shabby fellow, and I find in preserving a quiet dignity so far as I can I am treated with great courtesy.'

'To every member of his staff,' writes one of his principal agents, 'he was always and uniformly kind and considerate, and he seemed to take a pleasure in showing how he cared for their comfort and welfare. To give an instance in my own experi-

ence: he had been to Algiers, and was showing me there a little pocket-album containing photographs of Lady Peto and his children, and, finding that I had not one of the kind, he on his return to England sent a similar album to my wife, suggesting her sending the photographs of my family out to me. I venture to say that very few men, having such an enormous amount of business on their hands as he, would have taken the trouble or even have thought of doing such a kind and considerate action. I only mention it to show the kindly nature of the man, so that we need not wonder at the magnetic influence he had over his men. I am sure that every one of his employés would have gone through fire or water for him. His liberality was proverbial, and always done in a princely way; in fact, he could not do a mean action.'

The following was written to us after his death: 'It is with much regret that I hear of the death of your father, by whom I was engaged for some years on the works of the new Houses of Parliament. I possess a gold watch, so kindly presented to me in 1846, inscribed, "A tribute of regard." Although so many years have passed away, I am prompted to write to you on this occasion.'

To the last he preserved his interest in young

men and strove to help them forward. One of the staff of the Union Bank of London wrote to us that when he entered the bank Sir Morton, although he knew nothing of him beyond the recommendation of the Rev. Dr. Brock, became his surety in a bond of £500.

His considerateness is shown by the following letter to his youngest son concerning a young man whom he wished to advance: 'His father unwisely apprenticed him to Mr. ——, paying a premium which he could ill afford. If, without making any sacrifice, you can put him to the bench and give him just what he is worth and no more, I shall be glad; but don't for a moment do what you feel is against the interest of the firm or your rule of business.'

While living at Eastcote, up to the last two years of his stay there (when he was prevented by illness), he was a regular attender at the Uxbridge Bench, being a J.P. for Middlesex as well as of Suffolk, of which county he was a Deputy-Lieutenant; and he took great interest in superintending any improvements for neighbours.

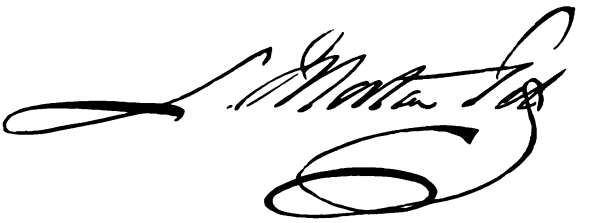
His health improved at Blackhurst. 'I like this place more and more,' he wrote; and of the terrace-walk, with its pretty view, he was especially fond.

He continued to take interest in missionary work and in the business of the Lady Hewley Trust, though he could not attend the meetings of trustees or committees so regularly as he had done in the earlier years of his Eastcote life.

It was owing to these qualities of character and to his activity that Sir Morton's closing years were so happy. After alluding to his wife and children in a letter written in 1879, he adds: 'To have attained the age of seventy with so large a portion of good health is another cause for gratitude. In these I feel I cannot count up the sum of all my heavenly Father has so graciously bestowed, and can only earnestly desire that He will give me a truly thankful heart, and make me to praise Him for all He has done for me and mine.'

In November, 1888, his health suddenly failed, but he recovered sufficiently to go to Cannes the following year. After his return he could not take the same exercise as before. He greatly enjoyed reading—especially that of biographies. Mentioning the 'Life of Professor George Wilson,' of Edinburgh, 'I read it,' he writes, 'about ten years since, and am glad to read it again.' His 'Five Gateways of Knowledge'—'very good also.'

He returned from Cannes very much altered, and



gradually became more feeble; but as long as he could he strove against invalid habits.

In October, owing to a chill on the liver, he was confined to bed, and he never after left his room. His thoughtfulness for others never deserted him. He was afraid his daughter, who shared in nursing, would get tired, and begged she should be relieved. On his overhearing the doctor ask if he had complained, he said: 'Did he say "complain"?' On two mornings he sent to tell others to see the sun rise, the effect had so pleased him. On the morning of his death, November 13, 1889, when the curtains were drawn back, as the sun came up beyond the valley filled with mist, he turned his head to look at it, and just lifted his hand to show those in the room that he saw it. He quite realized the text, 'In Thy light we shall see light,' and his peace of mind was never for a moment troubled. Strength sufficed him to signify he wished to say good-bye to the servants, who had well and kindly served him. One by one they came in to see him. Then he gradually sank.

He was buried in Pembury (his parish) Churchyard. It is significant that the service over him who had first brought in the Burials Bill was shared between the Vicar, the Rev. J. H. Battersby,

and the Rev. J. Angus, D.D., the Principal of the Regent's Park College (Baptist). The latter took the service in the churchyard, and in an address said 'he had known Sir Morton for nearly fifty years, and had seen him in all relations of life, in prosperity and in trouble, and he had known the sorrows and anxieties of his last illness. Like many other active and generous men, he had to submit to the loving discipline of their heavenly Father in preparation for the eternal life, and learn the lessons of patience and submission. The gem was polished by friction, and the soul perfected by sorrow. In his case patience had her perfect work, and a more noble, submissive sufferer he never knew. He remembered his active life, and, especially in regard to missionary societies, his generosity, wisdom, and large-heartedness. He also remembered his sorrow and sufferings, and found it hard to say whether he loved the man more and admired him more in the one state or in the other. He was faithful in them both.'

The gravestone, which is divided for husband and wife, bears the text: 'And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son' (1 John v. 2); and at the entrance to the pretty churchyard is a lych-gate, erected by

his widow and children, with, on the side facing the road, the text: 'For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive'; and on the church side the inscription: 'In memory of Sir S. Morton Peto, Bart., who is buried in this churchyard.'

It was the wish of her who was for so many years the partner of Sir Morton's home life, and at whose instance this sketch has been compiled, that the following lines of Robert Browning's should be quoted as applicable to the subject of this little memoir:

'One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break.
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.'

Ad finem fidelis.

APPENDIX.

RAILWAY AND OTHER WORKS EXECUTED BY SIR MORTON PETO

(EXCLUSIVE OF BUILDING CONTRACTS WITH MR. GRISSELL).

	Agents.	*Miles.*
*Great Western Railway:		
Paddington to Hanwell		
Hanwell Viaduct		
*South Eastern Railway:		
Hythe to Folkestone		about 12
Folkestone Viaduct		
Woolwich Graving Dock		
*Eastern Counties Railway (now Great Eastern Railway):		
London to Yarmouth		121¾
London to Ely	Mr. McKeone	
Ely to Norwich	Mr. Meyrick	
Ely to Peterborough	Mr. Meyrick	29½
Chatteris to St. Ives		10¾
Lowestoft Harbour Works		
*London and South Western Railway:		
Southampton to Dorchester	Mr. Beatty	59½
Cornwall Minerals Railway	Mr. Müller, Mr. T. P. Watson	50

* These contracts were taken by Grissell and Peto, *vide* p. 16.

MESSRS. PETO AND BETTS.

	Agents.	*Miles.*
Great Northern Railway	Mr. J. Hodges, Boston; Mr. G. Tate, Doncaster; Mr. G. Giles, Lincoln; Mr. T. White, Peterborough	99
East Lincolnshire Railway	Mr. H. McKeone, Louth; Mr. F. J. Rowan, Boston	47
Oxford and Birmingham Railway	Mr. C. Watson, Warwick	35
Oxford, Worcester, and Wolverhampton Railway	Mr. M. J. Morallee, and Mr. C. Watson	77
West End and Crystal Palace Railway, including tunnel under the corner of the Palace, and the South Water Tower, and extension to South Norwood	Mr. C. Watson, Streatham; Mr. Curry, Upper Norwood	9
South London and Crystal Palace Railway, and Nunhead and Greenwich	Mr. C. Watson; Mr. J. Baldwin	9
Buenos Ayres Great Southern, first section	Mr. R. Crawford	71
Dunaburg and Vitepsk Railway	Mr. W. Hartland	162
Algiers and Blidah Railway	Mr. M. Curry	32
Boulevard de la Republique, Algiers	Mr. M. Curry	
Norfolk Estuary	Mr. T. White	
Netherlands Land Company	Mr. T. White	
Frankfort to Homburg Railway	Mr. R. Crawford	
Leverton Branch Railway and Bridge over River Trent	Mr. G. Giles	

	Agents.	Miles.
Balaklava Railway	Mr. Beatty	39
London, Chatham, and Dover Railway (Strood to London)	Mr. C. Watson; Mr. G. Cowdery; Mr. J. Baldwin	33

MESSRS. PETO, BRASSEY AND BETTS.

Norwegian Grand Trunk Railway	Mr. Merrit; Mr. Earle	56
Victoria Docks, Thames Graving Docks, Thames Defences	Mr. W. Hartland	
London, Tilbury, and Southend Railway, and Bow and Barking Railway	Mr. T. White	50
Royal Danish Railway	Mr. H. McKeone	75
North Schleswig		70
Jutland Railways	Mr. F. J. Rowan	270
Elizabeth Liaz Railway	Mr. G. Giles	40
East Suffolk Railway: Ipswich to Yarmouth, Beccles to Lowestoft, and branches	Mr. C. Watson; Mr. M. Curry; Mr. Cowdery	74
Hereford, Ross and Gloucester Railway	Mr. C. Watson; Mr. G. Cowdery; Mr. Curry	23
Paris, Lyons and Mediterranean Railway: Lyons to Avignon	Mr. G. Giles	67
Queensland Railways	Mr. Murton	783¼
Vienna Railway	Mr. G. Giles	
Minories Warehouses	Mr. Holland	
Nepean Bridge	Mr. Willcox	

MESSRS. PETO, BRASSEY, BETTS AND JACKSON.

Grand Trunk Railway, including Victoria Bridge and Trois Pistoles Railway	Mr. J. Hodges, Montreal; Mr. G. Tate, Toronto; Mr. F. J. Rowan, Kingston	539
Quebec and Richmond Railway	Mr. J. Reekie, Quebec	

	Agents.	*Miles.*
New Brunswick Railway	Mr. Francis Giles, St. John	
Nova Scotia Railway	Mr. W. H. Rose, Shediac	
Canada Works, Birkenhead, for constructing Bridges and plant	Mr. G. Harrison	

MESSRS. PETO, BETTS AND CRAMPTON.

Rustchuck and Varna Railway		140
London, Chatham, and Dover Railway, Metropolitan Extensions and Victoria Improvements, with two Thames Bridges and branches	Mr. C. Watson; Mr. M. Curry	12

Elliot Stock, Paternoster Row, London.